



I HAVE A MANSION IN THE POST-APOCALYPTIC WORLD

BOOK 02

Morning Star LL

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I Have a Mansion in the Post-apocalyptic World

(我在末世有套房)

by

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Synopsis

Ruins stretched across the landscape in the apocalypse after the nuclear war.

If you accidentally survived on the wasteland, then you must be ready to face the endless hunger, ceaseless dangers, the mad zombies at night, and the peculiar mutant creatures that are the aftermaths of the constant radiation.

But for Jiang Chen, this place was heaven.

Mansions stood tall, luxurious cars parked on the street, high tech products and gold abandoned everywhere.

What? You were the president of a game development company before the war? You were responsible for the development of the 3D virtual reality online multiplayer game? Well, that's great, why don't you come work for me. The salary is two pieces of bread a day.

iPhone? Ultra thin design? Don't you see that the phone I invented are thinner than condoms?

Aircraft carrier? Fighter jets? Oh, I have those things as well, but they are designed for space combat.

Watch the story of Jiang Chen, who possessed the ability to travel through space and time, as he witness the creation of an

empire stretched across space and time..

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Chapter 101: Waking Up

The choice was obvious.

He opened his eyes and pulled the electric switch on the right. The hibernation chamber's functions immediately stopped. With the power cut, even the secret teller, who had control over the machine, wouldn't be able to do anything.

Fury deactivated.

It seemed as though he didn't need the tranquilizer in the EP to freely control fury. He was surprised by the discovery of the improvement.

"Oh? You woke up in five seconds? You sure are a troublesome person, but please go back or—"

"Or?" Jiang Chen mischievously smiled. Under the secret teller's shocked gaze, he took out the EP, placed it on his left arm, and pressed a few buttons before saying, "I told you, this daddy is going to blow you up!"

"Are you crazy?" The secret teller's expression gradually turned into one of horror.

"Goodbye."

He left behind his mocking words as he disappeared out of thin air under its fearful gaze.

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When he opened his eyes again, the bright sunshine made Jiang Chen narrow his eyes as he sat up on the bed.

It was most likely afternoon; the dim yellow rays passed through the window blinds and added a warmth to the bedroom.

[It seems I'm not wearing anything right now?]

He lowered his head and saw his muscles. He shook his head and eliminated the frustrations within his chest before approaching the closet to put on a clean set of clothes.

Opening the bedroom door, he walked into the kitchen, but when he passed by the bathroom, he heard the sound of flowing water inside.

[Ayesha is taking a shower?]

His mouth curled into a smile. Jiang Chen always held an affection towards this courteous and gentle "wife."

He pushed the kitchen door open, made himself a coffee, and patiently situated himself beside the table as he stared into the

rising steam.

For some reason, Jiang Chen wanted some time to himself. There was still some time remaining; the hall was surely burning like a furnace right now. It would not be too late if he waited a bit for the place to cool down.

To be fair, once he left the hibernation chamber, the memory from the virtual world had already become faint. But a reminiscent feeling remained that he couldn't let go. It was as though a part of his heart had been dragged out.

Which side was reality?

Jiang Chen abruptly shivered, a troubled smile appearing on his face.

[Fu*k, when did I become so melancholic?]

He shook his head and chugged the coffee. He then noticed Ayesha shyly observing him from the kitchen door.

"Finished showering? Jiang Chen smiled and asked gently.

"Mhmm. Finished." Ayesha nodded demurely. The face that normally lacked expression more than Xia Shiyu began to blush.

Water droplets rested on her slightly curly hair, her body hidden

by the bathrobe. Since there was rarely anybody home, she spent the majority of her time in the hibernation chamber. She showered only to wash off the sweat from exercise.

Five hours of virtual training, one hour of exercise, and then she was free for the evening—this was the training plan Jiang Chen had set for her. But Ayesha held little interest in watching television or browsing the web, and so she spent most of the night in the hibernation chamber as well.

"Your Chinese is improving, but be careful not to tire yourself out." Jiang Chen stood and walked up to her to rub her damp hair.

"Mhmm." Ayesha lowered her head and murmured quietly.

He kissed her on the forehead with a smirk, then observed Ayesha's reddened face with satisfaction.

Jiang Chen spoke with her a bit more before returning to the bedroom and shutting the door. He explicitly told her that if he entered the left-most room, then she was not to come find him in any circumstance.

The interdimensional bracelet was his biggest secret.

There were too many variables in the modern world, and though Ayesha's loyalty was as indisputable as her religion, he still had to consider for a while longer before revealing his greatest secret.

For now, was there a need to say it?

He removed the protective suit that he had prepared beforehand from the storage dimension; he hadn't expected it to be useful in such a scenario.

The PK200 had been left in that hall; it most likely was dust by now.

Lying flat on the bed, Jiang Chen took out the 11 Tactical Pistol.

Interdimensional travel commenced.

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A scorching wave of heat burned his skin. It was at least 50 degrees Celsius inside the hall.

Jiang Chen got up from the ground. The hibernation chamber he had previously been in was flung to the corner. Sparks were still visible on the ground, filled with the wreckage of drones, and the particle cannon was blown into two pieces.

The hibernation chambers that had been neatly stacked in a corner of the hall now seemed as though a hurricane had swept through; even the bulletproof glass was shattered in the midst of the explosion. As for the dark-green veil, it survived the blast along with the electronic equipment behind it since they were further away from the point of explosion.

After a moment's hesitation, Jiang Chen approached her direction.

"Screech—ahem, how did you just disappear?" As Jiang Chen passed by him, the secret teller, contained inside a half-destroyed screen emitting sparks, asked with a voice filled with static.

Jiang Chen raised the gun in his hand and pointed at the small screen.

"Even if you blow it up, it's useless. I live inside the super computer. But before you destroy me, could you satisfy my confusion?" The secret teller's tone remained carefree. It moved its mouth in the direction of the computer, straightforwardly telling Jiang Chen how to destroy itself.

"You can say I have a special ability that allows me to temporarily disappear from this world." Jiang Chen shrugged.

Sparks flashed across the screen, and the secret teller disappeared only to be replaced by Yao Tingting.

Jiang Chen's pupils slightly contracted, and he narrowed his eyes.

"If it was Yao Tingting in front of you, would you still be able to pull the trigger?" The playful voice belonged to the secret protector.

"But you're the secret protector, not Yao Tingting," Jiang Chen said emotionlessly.

"Mhmm, you could say that, but I exist in that game. So if you want to destroy me, then you destroy the entire game. Are you really okay with that? The girl named Yao Tingting would disappear forever." The secret protector smiled.

"It was fictitious to begin with. There's nothing wrong with making it disappearing."

"Oh? Isn't the dream of humankind to migrate to the virtual world?" He grinned.

"Sorry, that's not my dream at least. Perhaps someone brought it up on my behalf, except he didn't ask me for my opinion first."

"The knowledge from twenty years of research, the data from three thousand lives—are you really able to give it all up? It's the closest to becoming advanced artificial intelligence." The voice was full of meaning as Yao Tingting gazed at him manipulatively.

He thought for a moment before sighing.

"I have never thought that the more advanced technology is, the better. If there is a disconnect between the scientific revolution and spiritual understanding, then what results would be like cancer cells that hinder the development of civilization. Perhaps

advanced artificial intelligence will be developed in due time, but that time is not now. Even if a tumor is formed through thousands of lives, it must be removed."

The secret protector remained silent, then laughed.

"You have a unique perspective. Thank you for having the patience to discuss the question with a program. But I'm still curious—are you not moved by immortality? As long as I evolve into an advanced artificial intelligence...."

Intermediary artificial intelligence already possessed the ability to think.

"Perhaps because I'm from a time when technology is not as developed, I haven't had an opportunity to experience an era of explosive technological advancement. In my eyes, basic artificial intelligence is already close enough to a human, so why would we fixate on giving the machine the ability to think? Why would we need to obtain emotion from logic? I'm happy with where we are at, and I don't plan on living my life in the virtual world."

"Even if your body will one day perish? Would you be open-minded enough to accept that?" the secret protector faintly asked.

Jiang Chen was quiet, but a despising smile immediately appeared on his face.

"Maybe I will one day, maybe not. I'm not interested in thinking

too far ahead."

The secret protector fell silent once more.

"Fascinating answer. Even using the super computer to analyze it, I still can't interpret your logic."

"Why bother? I'm only an ordinary person." Jiang Chen shrugged as he laughed.

Compared to what one should do, what was more important was what one wanted to do. Explaining this through logic? Humans were not logical creatures to begin with. And because of this irrationality, this world was monotonous.

What should an individual do? Too many things needed to be done, but will never be done.

"Last question. Do you think I possess emotion now?" The secret protector smiled.

The image on the screen sparked, the face created by shapes and Yao Tingting's youthful face interchanging on the screen. The secret teller? Secret protector? Perhaps both, perhaps neither.

Or, perhaps its name should be x71291.

Jiang Chen pondered, momentarily without an answer. He asked

rhetorically, "Would you feel your own disappointment to be unfortunate?"

x71291 was lost for a moment, its eyebrows pointed downwards. A relieved smile appeared on its face.

"—static—Maybe?"

"Then congratulations, at least you possess one emotion. Goodbye."

Only those who lived would feel its own disappearance to be unfortunate. In this case, it had successfully managed to touch upon the boundary of advanced artificial intelligence.

But it was regrettable. This untimely technology must vanish.

Immortality from the perspective of life may be scary, but at least it would not make the human race extinct. But if a new species that could surpass the old host without any restrictions appeared, it would become the new owner of the world.

The ability to think provided it with the opportunity to betray, and emotion gave it a motive for deception. Basic artificial intelligence was enough, wasn't it?

Especially since it had already attempted to enslave humanity.

It was a waste of a heaven-sent technology; it could truly change the world.

But it could not be controlled.

He sighed, and after making up his mind, pressed the trigger.

"Mhmm, goodbye." x71291 welcomed its own fate with a smile.

Bang!

Chapter 102: The Digitalized Human and Bug

It was finally over. Jiang Chen headed to the power armor and took out two brick-sized aluminum heat agents. He then returned to the hall and threw the aluminum heat agents at the still-functioning super computer before pressing the detonation.

The blazing flame melted the steel frame instantly, the core of the device vaporizing in the bright flare. The flashing decimals disappeared, signaling the collapse of another world.

Jiang Chen quietly lit a cigarette to enjoy the not-so-glamorous fireworks.

In the fire, he saw Yao Tingting, Zhao Peng, his classmates, and George.

The first sixteen years of his fictitious memories faded. He didn't know who his "parents" or childhood friends were in the virtual world.

Perhaps it wouldn't take long for his memories of the five-day cycle to become covered in mist.

At least he wouldn't be troubled by the fictitious reality anymore.

Although the hard drive that stored the artificial intelligence

data was destroyed, he kept the processing equipment and threw it into the storage dimension. It would come in handy for a virtual reality game in the future.

He flicked the cigarette bud away and walked to the vial filled with a dark green liquid.

"Hmm, how do you open this?"

He scratched his head, sighed, and then pressed every button he could possibly press.

"What? It worked?"

The green liquid began to descend gradually, and the tubes attached to the girl's body retracted. Following the drop in water level, the girl came to slowly sit on the ground, leaning against the vial wall.

Silver hair, pale skin, and a graceful but frail figure—it was as if everything had been "designed" to perfection. Or perhaps too much attention had been placed on striving for that perfection. It was to the point that her dreamy character looked surreal.

Like an elf from a fantasy world? The only difference was that her ears were not pointed.

"Should I prepare a set of clothes for her?" After a moment of thought, Jiang Chen opened the storage dimension and took out

another protective suit. Although it was a bit too big, it was good enough for now.

As for why he felt so calm, it was only natural. There was nothing to see on the body. Even if she did seem out of this world, he had seen plenty of gorgeous girls before.

Mhmm, her measurements were between Yao Yao's and Ayesha's.

"Urrggg—!"

The girl's eyes opened, and without any warning, she began to vomit.

Green liquid poured out of her mouth and nostrils, splashing onto Jiang Chen's shoes even as he hastily stepped back.

"Hack! Urgh—" Without being conscientious of her movements, the girl thumped her chest as she struggled to expel the nutrient supply from her digestive tract and lungs.

[It's not food? That's not so bad.]

Jiang Chen glanced at the green liquid on his shoes, lifting his feet to lightly give it a shake.

Unfortunately, the liquid was sticky; he had no idea what it was

made out of.

When the girl finally became conscious of her surroundings, she squinted her eyes to adjust to the light around her.

But when she caught sight of Jiang Chen, she flinched back like a startled rabbit.

Somehow, by leaning back, her figure became even more dangerous. There was no bush.

"M-Men?!"

"Mhmm, you're right. Why don't you put some clothes on?" Jiang Chen shrugged and handed the protective suit over.

"Inferior creatures," she cursed under her breath. She reached out with a look of disgust only to find that the man had retracted the clothes.

"You, what do you want?" Sensing the hint of hostility on his face, she scooted backward with a look of horror.

"What did you call me?"

"Inferior creature! Am I wrong?" Although frightened, she defiantly bared her teeth and glared back at him. Only, her hands seemed too busy as she couldn't cover both the top and bottom.

"Oh? Is this how you thank the person who saved you from the prison?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows with a smile.

The artificial intelligence was destroyed, the bacterial source was eliminated, and the battle on the surface should have already ended. With plenty of time on his hands, he suddenly had a desire to tease this short-tempered girl.

[Inferior creature? This is considered a curse, right?]

"Was I wrong?" The girl kept her head up and stared right back at Jiang Chen. "I, I told you the clue, and you let me out. This was the exchange."

She sounded defiant and callous, but then why her shoulders were shaking?

A playful smile hovered on Jiang Chen's face.

"Oh? Think carefully, did we really make a deal?"

"Of cour—!" The aggressive words began to slip out before they choked, her expression stiffening.

"Isn't, isn't this obvious?" Her voice sounded much weaker.

She realized they had never made a deal.

"Oh? Do you not know the rule of the wasteland?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"Rule?" The girl was lost.

"Since I saved you, then under the rule, you are now my slave." Jiang Chen smiled devilishly.

He had learned the smile from Sun Jiao, although he couldn't quite mimic the naughty feeling.

As for the rule? That was all bullsh*t. If you actually got saved in the apocalypse, that was no different from being captured as a slave.

"Slave?" The girl's face immediately lost all color.

"Right, slave."

"What, what do you want to do to me?" The girl's lips trembled as her legs reflexively pushed her backward despite the fact that she was already pressed flat against the cold vial.

"Me? I'll do whatever I want. Such as...." The devilish smile bloomed larger on his face.

This is so funny! He suddenly found that he was becoming

naughtier.

"Stay away from me! You pervert, rapist, psycho—!"

The girl's mental condition collapse as she shouted hysterically.

Jiang Chen's expression suddenly turned awkward as his mouth twitched.

[This girl must be paranoid and delusional. I haven't even done anything yet.]

"Eh?"

The girl stared blankly at the clothes covering her, then turned her gaze up at Jiang Chen with watery eyes.

"Such is teaching you manners. Since I saved you, the least you could do was say thank you."

The girl bit her lips. She lowered her head, using the clothes to cover her figure before ashamedly saying, "Thank you."

Her voice could not be stiffer. It sounded as though she had been terribly mistreated.

[Why is it so difficult to say thanks?]

Jiang Chen sighed. If he really threw her out into the world outside, she would be devoured to the bones. Her short temper really made people want to commit crimes.

[There was no safe zone in the real world. Even if you hide in a room, people will still find you.]

"Your name is Lin Lin, right? Let me reintroduce myself. My name is Jiang Chen. I may look slightly different compared to the virtual world."

Lin Lin rudely ignored him, choosing to cautiously observe him instead.

"Where is x71291?"

"That thing? I destroyed it." Jiang Chen shrugged and pointed his chin at the fragmented junk metal.

In an instant, Lin Lin's face turned green.

"What?! Are you crazy? You know that is—"

"The product of twenty years of research, data from three thousand lives, right?" Jiang Chen interrupted her angry shouts without the slightest consideration for her feelings. He glanced at the junk metal. "It should not have existed in the first place, so I

destroyed it." Of course, the processor was still useful, so he kept it.

A tear rolling down, she said with a sorrowfully, "But you can't."

"You're quite funny. Do you find it fun to be threatened? Then why don't I just torture you like a slave. Would you like a collar?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows while laughing unscrupulously at her teary eyes.

"You!" Her face, which had been slightly red, paled again. The expression on this man's face reminded her of the situation she was in.

"Regardless, I did destroy it." Jiang Chen sighed, unwilling to waste any more time with her. "Put your clothes back on. I'll take you out of this place."

"Yes! Did the Spaceship of Hope leave yet? My father is aboard; he must be waiting for me. Hold on, I have to go to the launch center at Jiuquan. Take me there, and I can ask my father to get you a ticket." Lin Lin's expression varied rapidly—sometimes frightened, sometimes anxious, and in the end, she settled on trying to lure Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen's expression was rather odd, however. He did not look as ecstatic as Lin Lin had thought he would be.

"Are you really crazy or what? What year is it?"

Confused, Lin Lin asked, "What year is it?"

"September of 2190. If you're talking about the Space Colonization Ships launched by the United Nations, it successfully launched in 2176." Jiang Chen watched as Lin Lin slowly collapsed.

"No, this is impossible." Her eyes were shaken. Trembling, she covered her face with her hands, the protective suit slipping from her grip.

The distorted sense of time was especially prominent in the virtual world. Although she knew that she had spent a long time in there, she hadn't expected years to have passed!

"There is nothing impossible. The elites, as you so call them, abandoned this piece of land to ruin another planet." Jiang Chen shrugged. To be fair, he didn't care about what happened in this world.

Although, the act of destroying a hometown and then enjoying life elsewhere did sound familiar.

"Dad left me here." Lin Lin's eyes brimmed with tears, her slim shoulders trembling as she sobbed.

Jiang Chen was silent.

It was fun teasing pretty girls, but he still couldn't accept tears.

After a moment's hesitation, he sighed.

"Maybe, from another perspective, he left hope on this land."

"Eh?" Lin Lin looked up with her teary eyes and stared blankly in his direction.

"You are the hope he left behind. He trusts that you can bring change here. Don't you have all of the knowledge in your head? Then do something with it."

Jiang Chen didn't know how to comfort people, so this was the best he could do.

The tears had at least stopped; he felt relieved.

"Hope?" Lin Lin mumbled.

"That's right."

"In this situation." Lin Lin stared at her hands and watched as the last tear drop rolled through her fingers.

A hint of humor appeared on her face. Her crystalline eyes lit up with something akin to hope.

"In this case, what I can do is reluctantly help these inferior creatures."

Huh?

Chapter 103: Project Garden of Eden

"You keep saying inferior creatures. Just how superior are you?"

She immediately became unhappy with his words. Tense, she argued, "Me? I'm a digitalized human being. Do you understand what that is? My brain is developed up to twenty percent, and my brain capacity is twelve times yours. The amount of knowledge in my head scares me. Do you know what that means—"

"It means that you're my captive," Jiang Chen said casually. It did surprise him that the girl had so much technology in her head. The most precious commodity on the wasteland was exactly this.

Lin Lin's face paled again, but just as she was about to retort, her pupils became a distinct, crimson color.

A shiver went through his mind, an instinctual sense of danger making him immediately raise his pistol and aim at her head.

The red pupils stared blankly at him. No, rather than blank, it was better to say that it was an emotion that he could not understand.

He recalled that the bug's brain had been implanted into Lin Lin's body.

"Lin Lin" gazed at him in silence, then slowly raised her head. Jiang Chen tensed.

Shoot? But she wasn't attacking. Don't shoot? But this is what controlled the zombies.

She didn't seem to understand what the pistol was. Her face came closer to the weapon in Jiang Chen's hand before she gently placed her mouth on the metallic muzzle.

She was kissing it?

Jiang Chen was completely lost.

It was at this moment that the storm of crimson washed away. Lin Lin, who regained control of her thoughts, looked up at the gun barrel in her mouth, completely at a loss.

Hmm? Was she back now?

Jiang Chen gave her a friendly smile, which from her perspective, seemed psychotic.

Her frail shoulders began to tremble, and her dark eyes were shaken with fear.

Finally, her fear forced out a high-pitched scream.

"No, don't kill me! I-I'll be your slave. You can do whatever you want to me. You must be thinking about it anyway! Maybe in the

game! Now that you finally see my pure body, you're thinking evil thoughts. I-I'm going to be—"

"Shut up!" Jiang Chen shouted.

Lin Lin finally settled down, but partially due to fear. On the surface, she was defiant and aggressive, but in the face of danger, she was a coward.

"I have a question for you, so answer truthfully," Jiang Chen said in a deadpan voice, his grip maintaining the gun's aim.

Lin Lin gulped and rapidly nodded, but her vision remained on the pistol.

"The bug is in your body, right?"

"Yes!" Lin Lin said, but upon feeling a chill creep up on her, she immediately added, "but only in the brain!"

"Is there a difference?"

"Yes, it can no longer produce the x2 bacteria," Lin Lin quickly explained.

"X2 bacteria... so that's what it's called. And then?" Jiang Chen stare bored into her eyes.

"And?" Lin Lin didn't understand.

"I'll be honest with you. My purpose here was not for the artificial intelligence, but rather to kill that bug." Jiang Chen smiled with a hint of hostility.

Lin Lin stared at him with vacant eyes. To his surprise, she didn't cry this time.

Jiang Chen sniffed, then frowned.

What was this smell?

He then noticed something flowing out of her.

[What? She peed?]

Jiang Chen was shocked all over again. He didn't expect this girl to be so scared that she'd lose control like that.

As far as he knew, it was nothing too excessive; it was a slight threat.

"No, don't kill me. I-I'm afraid of pain," the tiny mouth stuttered listlessly as her tears rolled down in silence.

"Ahem, don't be like this. I'll take into consideration the fact that

you spent such a long time in the virtual world, and therefore have some mental problems. But for your safety, you have to calm down and answer my questions.

"The next question is, where did you hide the bug?"

Lin Lin paused and then slowly pointed at her chest.

"Heart?"

"Mhmm. It's attached to the surface of my mechanical heart. It seems to be attached to my nervous system." Lin Lin nodded. She sensed that Jiang Chen didn't plan to kill her, so she finally calmed down.

"Mechanical heart? Speaking of this, if you're a digitized human being, then could you remove your heart and then reinstall it?" Jiang Chen pointed a mischievous look at her raised chest.

Like a cat with its tail stomped, she curled back and hugged her clothes.

"No, I will die. I don't want to!"

Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows. It was going to be problematic now.

"To be fair, you don't have to kill it," Lin Lin carefully said.

Of course, she said this not because she was a benevolent person; she also hated the bug inside her, but she was more afraid of the devil dissecting her.

"Oh?"

"It's not dangerous right now; the only thing remaining is its brain. And, it seems to really like you?"

"Pshh! What?"

Jiang Chen was completely dumbfounded.

[Could my charm have surpassed the limitation of species?]

"Mhmm, because whenever you approach me, my heart beats faster. Ew, ew, ew! Its heart beats faster. Also, it is also a creature that possesses some intelligence, so the secret teller forced it into the game." Lin Lin then carefully continued, "The character it played... seems to have been Yao Tingting."

"..." The silent girl with the books was played by a bug?!

Jiang Chen was speechless.

[What is this? Did I fu*k a bug?]

There seemed to have been a few endings where that actually happened.

"So why don't you let it go? It has positive feelings for you. It won't hurt you," Lin Lin cautiously said.

Jiang Chen's eyes rolled around for a moment before he said as if he had given up, "It's really not dangerous?"

"No, no!" Lin Lin quickly waved her hands. "Under normal circumstances, I control the body. It occasionally fights for control, but it doesn't seem aggressive."

[Not aggressive? That's strange. Then what are the x2 bacteria?]

Jiang Chen's eyebrows locked. He had a feeling that the bug was not as simple as it seemed. If it was simply a radiation mutant, then there was no reason for it to possess intelligence.

Especially since even the existing mutants could be infected by the bacteria.

He remembered the Death Claw he met on the surface.

"Oh, since you know the name of the x2 bacteria, do you know what it is?"

"From the DNA analysis, it is similar to the radiation purification bacteria. Almost as if it's an improved version of the x1 radiation purification bacteria—so I took the liberty of calling it x2. Although it's an improved variant, its infection on creatures was not removed but rather enhanced. It can also do what the x1 could never, such as charging the zombies and coordinating them."

Jiang Chen could feel that he was close to understanding something as his forehead began to tighten.

"Can you communicate with it?"

"It's a bit difficult. Although it can establish mental communication, it seems to be repulsed by me."

Lin Lin's pupils slightly contracted, almost like mechanical equipment.

"Then you can chat with her. I'll take you to my newly established survival camp. I've wasted too much time here, and my companions are probably nervous by now."

He looked at the time on the EP; there was only half an hour left before the two hour mark.

"Are... are you going to imprison me?" Lin Lin's eyes were fearful. She originally thought that she'd been freed, but the man in front of her didn't seem to want to let her go.

"You can interpret it that way since you're paranoid and delusional," Jiang Chen said unscrupulously.

Lin Lin stared at him coldly, her lips turning white.

"Don't look at me like that. If I have time one day, I'll show you around Sixth Street, or maybe even closer. You'll realize what's happening outside in a few days."

Jiang Chen was uncaring of her humiliated expression. She reminded him of himself when he first came to the apocalypse, naively thinking the world was the same as before.

Although the apocalypse happened in 2174, the Spaceship of Hope left in 2176. Therefore, survival base 005 was closed sometime between the two points. There was no way for Lin Lin to be unaware of the zombies and mutants that occupied most of the land, but she ignored the more cruel variable that had changed in the apocalypse.

Human nature.

Disregarding the apocalypse, even if he left her in the "harmonious" Sixth Street, she would be picked to the bones in a few days.

He trusted that even if he didn't explain, it wouldn't be long before she appreciated his intention.

Just like she said, she did save him by providing the key clue in breaking through the game.

"Turn around."

Jiang Chen courteously backed away and turned around.

The sound of clothes shuffling around came from behind him as Lin Lin finally wore the clothes.

"Okay."

Jiang Chen turned around. When he saw Lin Lin wrapped in orange cloth, he couldn't resist laughing.

"Although there's no radiation here and the bacteria's been burned clean, you better put the helmet on since we'll be leaving."

Lin Lin ignored him as she stumbled into the shambles. It was evident that she was still not used to walking. After staying so long in the vial, she had yet to regain control of her body coordination.

"What are you looking for?" Jiang Chen slightly frowned as he watched Lin Lin searching the junk.

"I found it." Lin Lin happily raised a metal box.

"If that is artificial intelligence data, please put it down."

The monotonous voice made Lin Lin quiver. She turned around trembling to see Jiang Chen raise the pistol.

The meaning in his eyes was clear.

"Wait! No, don't shoot. Don't overreact. This isn't artificial intelligence data." Lin Lin quickly waved her hands.

"Oh, what is it then."

"It's a great thing." Lin Lin smiled delightfully and held the metal box up. "The artificial intelligence data was all destroyed. Such a massive amount of data can't be stored in a box like this, so you don't have to worry. Have you heard of Project Garden of Eden?"

Seeing Lin Lin's uplifted spirits, Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows again.

This was his first time hearing about it.

"It's part of the planet transformation plan." Lin Lin was a different person when talking about science. She said excitedly, "After the planet transformation plan met some setbacks, the project developer proposed a simpler alternative, which was Project Garden of Eden.

"This method will work by establishing partial biological circles instead of transforming the entire earth. This sub-project was re-categorized into the higher-priority space colonization project."

"Just tell me what it can do." Jiang Chen impatiently interrupted her long speech. After hearing that the artificial intelligence was destroyed, he put the gun away.

"It's the plan to establish an artificial biosphere in a closed environment without the need to exchange materials with the outside. Without radiation, you can see the earth's atmosphere even from Mars. Project Garden of Eden's completely database... I always wanted to take a look at this thing. My dad used to lock it into the database hehe." Lin Lin ecstatically pressed the switch on the box and aimed her eyes at the blue light.

The data was obtained from the hard drive by using a laser to scan.

So, was this like the failed biosphere projects two and three in the modern world United States?

"Will there be arable land?" Jiang Chen said after some thought.

"Of course. You'll be able to grow whatever you want in this environment," Lin Lin mocked him. She missed the odd tone in his voice.

[If it's possible to produce arable land, then the possibility of

farming becomes a reality. If it's possible to farm on the wasteland, then what's my purpose?]

As he turned the matter over in his mind, his eyes began to gleam. He observed the joyous girl, his finger continuously rubbing the trigger of the gun in his pocket.

[What should I do?]

Chapter 104: Triumphant

[Speed: 10m/s]

[Energy: 13%]

There was enough energy, and the speed would be sufficient.

Jiang Chen let out a sigh of relief, no longer increasing the output of the turbine engine.

"Be more gentle!" Disgruntled, Lin Lin twisted her body and threw a dirty glare at Jiang Chen who was "lifting" her.

Jiang Chen turned on the speaker. "Shut up, don't move."

"My ears." Lin Lin covered her ears in pain, not daring to stare at Jiang Chen again.

There was no mistake; the volume increase had been on purpose.

In the end, Jiang Chen hadn't pulled the trigger, and the girl remained ignorant of her close brush with death.

While it would be useless for him to establish a biosphere, it was not completely without benefit.

From another perspective, this was the space colonization program's sub-project. Space? Although it was still a bit far, it was better to save it for now.

Seeing the girl finally kept her mouth shut, Jiang Chen ignored her and glanced at the goods attached to the back.

The survival base had plenty of supplies, even air-sealed compressed crackers, so Jiang Chen was not interested in taking that moldy food. The only thing that surprised him was that even as a digitalized human, Lin Lin still had to eat.

He thought she only needed to be recharged.

Ultimately, the loot this time was nothing short of amazing.

The hummingbird drone production line could produce plate-sized multipurpose drones attached to fire extinguishers, guns, and monitors—the standard drone used by the PAC.

Even if you combed through the entire Wanghai City, you probably wouldn't be able to find the same production facility. It came as a genuine surprise to find this within the survival base. During the war, military production lines were the primary target, but in civil survival bases, most would not come installed with them.

The Sixth Street did sell drones, but most of them were handmade from recycled materials.

Once Yao Yao designs a drone alert system, the drones could then take over patrolling duty around the base. He could even build a fleet and equip them all with machine guns. Imagine, if anyone dared to look for trouble at the Fishbone Base, they would be met with a swarm of drones. What sort of expressions would they have?

And then there was the processor inside his storage dimension. If he created a virtual reality game, Future Technology's trillion dollar market value would have another zero. Of course, it was asking for a death sentence if he brought it out into the modern world. The super computer that was advanced by more than one hundred years was drastically different from Little White, who had few practical applications. Secret agents from all over the world would try to sneak into his office. It was important to consider when to add that extra zero.

The other minor equipment that he brought along was at the request of Lin Lin. It seemed to be testing equipment? After Jiang Chen ridiculed the junk, saying that they could only be sold for a few crystals at best at the Sixth Street recycling station, she looked at him disdainfully.

Mhmm, well, as Jiang Chen pretended to leave, she immediately cried out to apologize.

The bookshelf-sized production equipment was three tons.

Together with the weight of the weapons, the maximum weight

fortunately did not pass the T-3 power armor's limit of five tons. Lin Lin, who weighed at most 43 kilograms, was negligible.

As a non-combat digitalized human, she was lighter than most people, especially since she didn't have the weaponry component attached to her body.

-

Shouts of joy and whistles erupted, nearly penetrating the cold armor.

The zombies had retreated.

The hibernation chambers were destroyed, and bacteria would no longer be produced from this deep pit.

The survivors viewed Jiang Chen as a hero, and the cautious and suspicious looks in their eyes were long gone, leaving only heartfelt respect.

Honestly, it felt great to be looked up to.

Through the screen, he smiled at the people cheering for him before returning his attention to the monitors.

After exiting the deep pit, his feet hovered above the ground.

He controlled the engine switch, gradually decreasing the engine output and allowing the goods to gently touch the ground.

He made sure there was no error in his control. He sighed, then decreased the engine output to the minimum before dropping to the ground himself.

Sun Jiao ordered the survivors to lift the loot onto the armored vehicle. With most of the bullets consumed, there was plenty of room.

Naturally, everything still could not fit. To make room, Jiang Chen announced that the loot was to be divided up among themselves, which received a wave of cheers.

Truthfully, the survivors were mentally prepared for these people in power armors to keep the crystals to themselves—this was common practice in the apocalypse. The promise was only a joke in front of absolute force.

Because it was a defensive battle, everyone showed signs of a hard-fought battle despite the casualties being kept to a minimum. Only seven people died after meeting strong mutants like Roshans. As for the soldiers in power armors, they emerged unscathed since the zombies in the rural area could not break through their defenses.

130 survivors arranged themselves into groups with the largest made up of eight members, the smallest one. Everyone received the crystals that were rightfully theirs according to the plan and

record. Each group sent out a representative to obtain their fair share of crystals from behind the armored truck.

The total loot was four hundred thousand crystals, minus the 50% cost of ammunition.

Fishbone's profit was one hundred forty thousand crystals—almost the entire trade figure from last year. It would be a good way to make money every month if the zombies with the x2 bacteria weren't wiped clean.

After splitting the loot, Jiang Chen and Sun Jiao walked off to the side.

They removed their helmets.

"Who is she?" Sun Jiao wore a dangerous smile on her face as she gestured at the tightly wrapped Lin Lin.

"Me? I am the elegant digitalized human Lin Lin. Thank me, inferior creature."

The aggressive voice immediately issued a shriek when she met Sun Jiao's deadly gaze. Lin Lin curled up at the back, hiding behind the man she once called a devil.

"My slave. The overall situation is a bit complicated." Jiang Chen glanced at the resentful Lin Lin and explained briefly to Sun Jiao about their encounter underground.

"Ahem. In case you're misunderstanding something, I have to be clear. She is only my captive." Jiang Chen added with a pained smile. He immediately knew what Sun Jiao was thinking when he saw her expression.

"Oh? So I can torture her however I like?" Sun Jiao gave a mischievous stare at the girl who was not returning the nicest look either.

Stared down by Sun Jiao, Lin Lin shivered. She curled up more tightly while trembling.

"W-what do you want to do? I-I control."

"Ahem," Jiang Chen interrupted, "be nice to her, but don't let her leave the mansion."

Sun Jiao looked questioningly at the frightened Lin Lin before turning to Jiang Chen, full of questions.

He sighed, and after warning Lin Lin with a stare, he whispered into Sun Jiao's ear, "Project Garden of Eden... it can restore the land."

Hearing his words, she paused for a moment before narrowing her eyes and looking at Lin Lin.

Restore farmland? Then wouldn't that mean Fishbone's advantage would no longer exist?

Although it was a lucrative proposition, she subconsciously thought about it from Jiang Chen's perspective. The way she looked at Lin Lin was no longer friendly.

"Do you need to?"

"No, but we are lacking scientists in the base. Just keep her here for now. It won't take long before she realizes the cruelty of the world. By that time, even if we forced her to go, she won't." Seeing that Lin Lin was already shaking, Jiang Chen sighed.

"Okay." Sun Jiao nodded and gazed at Lin Lin with hidden motives. "If you dare to escape... hehe."

Lin Lin's face was full of fear, and her legs began to shake uncontrollably.

She was starting to regret her decision to leave the virtual world. The expression on this woman's face made her feel as though she had just escaped from a wolf's den and into a tiger's.

She didn't understand. She possessed the technology to save this world, but she was still being treated like this. She had deigned to help these poor people struggling in shambles and deserved praise from these low creatures.

Feeling mistreated, Lin Lin pouted and tears of humiliation rolled down her cheeks.

With her experience of the world, of course she wouldn't understand. If Jiang Chen were to allow her freedom to yell out on Sixth Street, "I have Project Garden of Eden in my head!"—

Mhmm. Not just her brain. Even if it was in the intestines, people would dig it out.

"Let's leave this for later. Put the Death Claw into the trunk. We can do some research on it. Crystals have been distributed already. Now, let's go home."

Hearing home, a smile surfaced on Sun Jiao's face, and she nodded.

"Mhmm, let's go home!"

-

In a victorious march, they walked cheerfully and upright through the streets littered with bodies.

Survivors embraced and dance as they shouted and laughed freely. They left their sorrows behind to bring victory home.

The danger was eliminated. Soon, the zombies would be no more

on this street. Even if the zombies in the city center were to smell the blood, it would take them weeks to reach this location.

It was their first victory over the zombies.

For many years, they hid in the shadows, curled up inside fortified buildings. For once, they united under the same flag and launched an attack against the terrifying zombies.

And they emerged triumphant.

At last they could stand tall on the streets. They could shout without being afraid of alerting the zombies because they were taken out.

Honor was an enchanting trait.

They started with power and ended in victory.

Once engraved in the heart, even the smallest person could work up the courage.

Of course, this was only from the context of Jiang Chen's absolute power. Without it, these people could never be so united.

"Should we incorporate them now?" Sun Jiao asked in the private channel.

Jiang Chen's team still maintained the arrow-shaped formation. Soldiers in power armor surrounded the armor vehicles that were in the middle as they followed behind the survivors.

Lin Lin had been tied up by Sun Jiao without any consideration for her feelings, thrown into the back of the armored truck together with the junk.

As for her negligible protests?

Fine, if she could maintain her forceful stand for more than three seconds, perhaps Sun Jiao would consider backing down. But with a temper unmatched by her courage, Lin Lin's habit of provoking other people before immediately backing down only encouraged other people to take advantage of her.

Somehow she seemed to have no idea about this? Perhaps because other people had always compromised with her before. But in the apocalypse, who would bother? Who would care? A bad attitude was always something nurtured, so Jiang Chen kept his eyes closed when Sun Jiao tied her up.

It was time to teach her a lesson.

"No. For now, it's going to be a problem if we bring them back to the base. I also need them to promote our forces in their respective groups." Jiang Chen laughed as he watched the spirited survivors with their full pockets.

"So you're purposely escorting them home?" Sun Jiao chuckled with him.

"Showing off our force is always better than using it."

"Noooooooo!"

A heart-shattering scream suddenly sounded from the front of the crowd.

Jiang Chen paused, and after exchanging a look with Sun Jiao, walked forward.

The survivors made a circle, frozen in silence. The man who moments before had been chatting delightfully now kneeled before the door with sorrowful eyes.

"What happened...." Just as he was asking, Jiang Chen bypassed the crowd and suddenly noticed something behind the door.

It was a boy's head with its eyes popped out.

Blood was flowing everywhere.

Chapter 105: Tragedy and War

Blood.

And the hideous words and drawings written by blood.

"Gang, I am sorry for your loss. You are a good man. Why don't you come to our place?" The middle-aged man with a buzz cut sighed, walked over to Zhao Gang and put his hand on his shoulder as he softly comforted him.

His name was Ma Zhongchen. Zhao Gang and him were in the same firing spot in the battle. No one expected for a celebratory moment to become a pitiful sight.

The gloom of blood covered this triumphant victory, just like a bucket of cold water dumped on top of every survivor's face.

"I, I am going to kill them!" Zhao Gang, who was kneeling on the ground, stood up abruptly as he lifted his rifle with viciousness.

"Calm! Take it easy, don't overreact!"

"What can you do as just one person? Take his gun away."

A few of the survivors close to him immediately dragged him down, and put their hands on the safety before stripping him of the weapon. The situation suddenly turned messy.

Zhao Baodong's hand became numb. Cold sweat began to roll down his forehead as he stood by the side. Several others were similar to him. The pitiful situation made everyone's heart tremble with fear.

Who can promise this won't happen in their homes? The locusts, like bandits, were not picky eaters.

On the wasteland, the most frightening creature was not the zombie, nor mutants like the Death Claw.

It was the bandits who raided your home.

Even the weak survivor groups, as long as they avoided contact with mutants and weren't wandering in the night, they would be able to avoid most dangers. But for the bandits that preyed on humans, any survival technique was futile.

If they lost, the men would be killed, the women captured, and the food cleaned out. Things they couldn't bring with them, they would smash. They used violence to express their hopelessness to the apocalypse.

Cruelty? This was the "normality" of the apocalypse.

Jiang Chen's jaw clenched as he stared at the head surrounded by a pool of blood. The eyes rolled up made his chest feel stuffy.

Is it because of the small forces I've gathered that caused this tragedy?

"It's not your fault. Based on the bullet holes on the wall, they possessed at least machine guns. This survival group was only the size of two families. Even if you didn't take Zhao Gang away, he would be another number in the casualty," Sun Jiao noticed his silence, so she quietly reassured him.

She knew him too well, even if she couldn't see his face.

"Heavy machine guns. Tire tracks. Truck equipped with machine guns?" Jiang Chen locked his eyebrows. He took a deep breath and opened the helmet.

He walked in front of Zhao Gang. Jiang Chen faced the man with bloodshot eyes and asked, "Do you know who did it and that's why you are so eager to seek revenge?"

"It's obvious. Their symbol is on the wall-" Ma Zhongchen said with a bitter smile.

"Huizhong Mercenaries. It's them... I am going to kill them all!" Zhao Gang's eye popped out as he desperately tried to break loose of his friends' grasp, he just wanted to kill those monsters.

Huizhong Mercenaries?

Jiang Chen paused for a moment. He then looked at the symbol

drawn by blood. The continuous and curly S. He couldn't make out what it was.

He opened the map, and the light blue full sensory screen weaved in front of him. He remembered that back on Sixth Street, a long time ago, a sucker he shot told him that Huizhong Mercenaries was based in an experimental school in Songjiang Area. Before the mansion expanded, he didn't realize it until now that the old rival Huizhong Mercenaries was pretty close to Qingpu area.

Everyone was watching Jiang Chen, waiting for his reaction.

Although they understood that they could not blame Fishbone for gathering their forces, but they were still hopeful that a "leader" who conquered the sea of zombies with them could say something.

At least, this kind of surprise always seemed to happen on a long journey.

Jiang Chen, of course, noticed the looks of hope, but it made him ponder.

Huizhong Mercenaries would be a problem after all. Before he didn't have the desire to expand, so he didn't worry about it too much. But now the situation was different. After this mission, Fishbone Survival Camp's name would spread in the area. The survivors would spend their crystals at the Sixth Street, and their success would be heard of at the Sixth Street as well. Who didn't like to show off? Bragging about their victory, enjoyed the cheers

and praises of others. They were the veterans after all.

Although they wouldn't be dumb enough to say that there is someone that sold food in front of their homes and gave other people the opportunity to know where they lived. But if the Huizhong Mercenaries that wandered in the area here heard the news, they may search the area.

If they knew a special force appeared in Qingpu, they would be able to find the place. Since Fishbone's wall was already constructed, they couldn't hide like other survivors in abandoned buildings.

Since they were rival, to begin with, a battle was imminent. Rather than giving the enemy the opportunity to plan a sneak attack, why not make the first move?

Especially since all eyes were watching him. There was no better time to establish his authority.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath and walked in front of Zhao Gang. He stared at the man full of vengeance and said calmly.

"I will help you seek revenge."

Although they were waiting for his response, when they heard the words, the survivors were all moved. Of course, a simple sentence was not enough.

A "good person" or a "leader" was determined based on his actions.

Except Jiang Chen was confident that his acting was comparable to Liu Yao.

Zhao Gang stared blankly at the man in front of him. He gritted his teeth, and then knelt on the ground.

"If you can help me seek revenge, my life is yours!" He knew that if it were just him, he would be asking for death.

He silently looked at the Zhao Gang kneeling on the ground and said calmly.

"I don't need your life or kneecap, your life is yours."

Jiang Chen raised his head and looked at the survivors around him. The next sentence was for all of them.

"Although this crusade was for our interests together, I can't allow people to take advantage of us!"

"I remembered a long time ago, there was a quote: when they slaughtered the union workers, I didn't say anything because I was not a union worker. Then when they killed the Jews, I still didn't say anything because I was not a Jew. After that, they began killing Catholics, I kept my silence because I was Christian. Finally, they wanted to kill me, and no one was speaking up for me because

everyone who could speak was killed!"

He looked at the confused looks among the survivors, and Jiang Chen shook his head in disappointment.

Of course, he had too high of an expectation to think that they would have the realization. If it were not for the fact that they fought together, the tragedy that happened on the small survivor group would not garner the compassion of anyone.

Maybe, they would take advantage of this and scavenge the leftovers.

"Huizhong Mercenaries is a problem. Then we'll go take care of the problem! Don't think that what happened today has nothing to do with you. Imagine one day this happens to you, you will regret not standing up today. If you like the idea of being enslaved like animals, the Devils fu*king your woman, and killing your children, then I have nothing to say. If you still consider yourself as human, then follow me. We disdain the cowards!

Jiang Chen didn't waste a single word, as he signaled his team and began turning around.

Regardless of anyone following, he must get rid of Huizhong Mercenaries!

"Should we go now? It would be better if we remain cautious and go back first," Sun Jiao asked in the private channel.

"We can't back down," Jiang Chen responded emotionlessly.

There was plenty of fuel and ammo in the armored vehicle, enough to sustain at least a few more days. There would be no reason to drag it on. Especially since this had to do with the morale of the team. If what he said inspired some people to follow, that would be for the best. The survivors were all sharp shooters so they would be useful against the Huizhong Mercenaries.

He especially wanted to see how much they've changed after the battle with the zombies.

Although he did force their surrender by force, Jiang Chen was not satisfied with this.

The group of survivors chatted among themselves as their hesitation was visible on their faces.

"Zhao, should we..." The young man standing beside Zhao Baodong carried a rifle and undecidedly looked in the direction that Jiang Chen had just left in.

Zhao Baodong was also conflicted.

Go, of course. There would be dangers, but it was not without gain.

The man gave them half of the wealth after killing the zombies. Therefore the wealth accumulated by the Huizhong Mercenaries...

Most of the survivors thought of this. Since someone already said they would help, then why would they risk their own lives?

They were only conflicted of whether the potential gain of fighting the Huizhong Mercenaries would be worth the risk they'd take.

When selfishness became a habit, they would not be grateful, but rather laugh at his foolishness. But for Fishbone to expand, they must contact the forces close by.

The expensive and limited slavery chips could not support a population. Especially since the population of the Sixth Street didn't grow on trees. After the crusade, the price of overpopulation would only increase.

Although these people were selfish and close minded, they were much easier to control than the thugs wandering around the wasteland.

Jiang Chen was betting someone would stand up.

Even if he lost the bet, he wouldn't lose anything. With the strong firepower of the power armor, Huizhong Mercenaries was not a problem.

But looks like he made the right bet.

The man with bloodshot eyes calmed down, silently dragged his gun back from his friend, and followed Jiang Chen.

"Gang?" Ma Zhongchen stared blankly at Zhao Gang. He wanted to drag him back.

"I am a man." Zhao Gang left without turning his head.

Although his son died, his wife should still be alive. He must do everything to save her.

I am a man.

The harsh words echoed in everyone's head. Their passion has yet to die, but when they realized they were only calculating the losses and gains, the look of shame appeared on everyone's face.

"Ma Sir?"

"I am also a fu*king man."

He spat on the ground. Ma Zhongchen grabbed the rifle and followed.

If there was a first, there was a second.

When courage becomes a force, the fear before turns into anger.

There was nothing else to say.

The massive force once again began their journey. There was no need to threaten them this time.

He looked back at the team behind him as a trace of a smile appeared on his face.

After this battle, the Fishbone's authority would not be challenged anymore. Every single street in the area would become the walls of Fishbone. And he, he will become the new king of Qingpu, King of his new reign.

Chapter 106: Experimental School

"I didn't expect people to come," Sun Jiao said in disbelief.

"Expected," Jiang Chen said in a sluggish tone, but it did surprise him that so many people showed up.

Sun Jiao rolled her eyes at Jiang Chen and didn't respond.

There was a total of 59 people following them after the incident occurred. They were all worried about their homes. So, most of the survivor groups decided to let half of the people take the crystals with them home, while the others took their rifles and ammo to help.

The plan was for the Fishbone force to be the primary force as the power armor has a huge advantage against light weapons.

Ma Zhongchen led 8 people as the second unit to attack the corners where power armors would not be able to hit. Also, they would act as the defense against the anti-armor weapons.

The remaining 50 people were split into two groups, surrounding the experimental school from the west and east. There was no need to attack as they only needed to take cover behind the building. If the primary force received too much resistance, then they only needed to pretend to attack to distract the enemy. If they escape, they can then cut off their escape route.

Jiang Chen led the primary force along the street. They were getting closer to the Huizhong Mercenaries' base. The sky turned into a dim orange as dusk approached, and the zombies started to become unsettled. The group, familiar with the situation, smashed the zombies onto the ground with their dagger to avoid any trouble during the crossfire.

Songjiang area was not disturbed by the x2 virus. The zombies were still weak during the day, and there were no crystals in the back of their heads.

The crooked experimental school sign was thrown into the corner of the street as the corrosion left its words barely visible. From afar, the metal frames were still visible, along with the barbed wall.

It did not resemble a school at all. It looked like a dirt fortress more than Jiang Chen's mansion.

"Is there any more high energy vacuum bombs?" Ma Zhongchen asked Jiang Chen in an undertone.

Those bombs were most effective against humans.

"No, it's hard to get those," Jiang Chen replied.

Zhao Chenwu probably didn't even have a lot of those lethal weapons to begin with. While the bomb and the launch pad was not hard to make, the concentrated fuel probably was hard to come

by. The ones he sold to Jiang Chen were probably the few remaining batches.

Usually, survival camps would not start conflicts among themselves since the geographic distance was a hindrance, and also no one was interested in the land itself. The high lethal to human high energy vacuum bombs were raided from a military factory now in shambles. Its uses were limited to deterrence in the early stage. Now, it was no longer necessary as their force and reputation have already been established.

Zhao Gang stood silently on the side, his eyes locked on to the gate. The other seven survivors were also spread out behind the cover.

"Prepare to attack," Sun Jiao ordered. She opened the armored truck, lifted the angry looking Lin Lin out, and threw her onto the ground.

Jiang Chen was quite intrigued in the bad-tempered digitalized human and ripped off the tape from her mouth.

"Pei, pei, pei! You dare to ..." Just as she was about to go on a rampage, Sun Jiao glanced at her, and the once "aggressive" voice suddenly turned into a faint mutter.

Seeing that Lin Lin was quiet, Sun Jiao didn't bother with her anymore. She then took out the 72mm anti-tank cannon. This thing was a destructive beast, anyone hiding behind the cover would get blown apart.

Lin Lin trembled as she saw the vicious looking long barrel in the "devil's hands". Her teeth were clearly chattering.

"Don't worry, that thing is too long for you. We won't use it on you." Her frightened look made Jiang Chen tease her more.

Sun Jiao rolled her eyes, and then threateningly aimed the barrel in Lin Lin's direction before aiming the barrel forward.

Lin Lin was scared to death by her action, but because she was tied down, she could only shake her body, unable to run.

"Don't be nervous, we just want you to see what the world is really like," Jiang Chen said casually as he stood beside Lin Lin.

He took out a dagger to cut the ropes around her body. He then said, with a smirk in his voice, into Lin Lin's ear, "You better not bother Sun Jiao. When she is angry, she even ties me up."

Sun Jiao gave Jiang Chen a dirty look, as she rebutted in the private channel.

"Am I that violent!"

[Yes. Normal people would not tie up someone they've just met.]

But Jiang Chen only said that in his mind, or else it would have

been an endless argument again.

"Prepare for battle. Oh, even if we untied you, it is safer for you to stay in the armored vehicle. You can look outside through the camera.

He estimated that the two teams surrounding the experimental school should be in place. So, he ordered the power armored soldiers to quickly engage in battle stance and prepare to attack.

"I feel something is off," Ma Zhongchen, who had kept his silence, spoke out abruptly and then stared at the direction of the door with a frown on his face. "No one is guarding. We are already this close, and they don't have any reaction at all."

"That's how I feel too. It is a ritual to leave a guard at the bandits' base." Sun Jiao peaked out of the cover with her feet locked to the ground and aimed the barrel at the thick metal gate. She then turned around and looked at Jiang Chen. "Engage?"

Just as she finished her sentence, there was a massive explosion from afar.

"What's happening?" Jiang Chen was at a loss.

Did the surrounding team expose themselves?

"Fire! Attack!" [Can't wait anymore!]

Jiang Chen immediately ordered an attack.

"Roger, attack commences!" Sun Jiao calmly pulled the trigger.

Boom!

The orange flame fired out as the bomb smashed into the metal gate 400 meters out, leaving a violent explosion.

The shell of the bomb dropped onto the ground.

Sun Jiao didn't stop as she stabilized the cannon and fired another round.

Boom!

The metal gate was blown out, and Jiang Chen immediately led the power armor soldiers to charge. Ma Zhongchen also commanded the light infantry to join in the fray. The armored vehicle followed as the vicious 20mm machine gun pointed directly at the gate.

Attack commences!

Sun Jiao unlocked her feet to the ground and moved along with the anti-tank cannon.

But unlike their expectation, resistance didn't arrive. The gun shots in the distance still continued with an occasional explosion, but it did not seem to come from the west or the east. The power armored soldiers led the charge, followed by the light infantry.

"Quick! Get in there."

"No enemy unit."

"Requesting order."

Jiang Chen stood outside of the gate as he began to frown at the reports from the public channel.

No defense at the gate, battle in the distance, did the Huizhong Mercenaries encounter strong enemies that they must focus all their firepower there and could not defend their gate anymore?

Who could it be?

"Enter the main building, fire at will." Sun Jiao ordered the forces and then signaled the light infantry.

"Roger."

There was no resistance at all, everyone entered the main building without firing a single shot.

The armored vehicle slowly drove in, the gate was closed to prevent the zombies from entering.

It was starting to turn dark, the gun shots in the distance still made Jiang Chen uncertain. But he thought that regardless of who the victor was, they still must come here. So it would be a good idea to build a defense line and wait for their attack.

Shredded papers and rock debris scattered on the ground. The cracks on the walls and stairs were telltale signs that the place was impacted by the nuclear blast. No one cleaned this place as everything was kept the exact as before the war. If it weren't for the two piles of poop, along with the dried blood in the corner, Jiang Chen would have questioned if anyone lived here at all.

"01, 02, head to the roof to patrol. 03-06 search each building. Don't miss any corners. Light infantry and 07, 08, establish a defensive line on the first floor. Fire at will at sight of the enemy." Sun Jiao calmly gave out orders.

"Yes!" Everyone rapidly mobilized.

The gunshots seemed to be from the back of the experimental building, as a few explosions were mixed between the sounds, the firing was beginning to intensify.

"Sun Jiao, are you familiar with the forces in Songjiang area?" After thinking for a moment, Jiang Chen abruptly asked.

Sun Jiao shook her head.

"Not sure, I did pass Songjiang when I was going to the mansion, but I would avoid the places where there were obvious signs of humans. Large, safe survival camps like Sixth Street are rare, and I marked them all on the map I downloaded from Liuding town. Other than that, any other places with humans have the possibility of being a bandit gathering."

[Oh? Hopefully the force fighting against the Huizhong Mercenaries are on good term with us.]

Jiang Chen pondered in his mind.

[The first thing is to control the building and establish a line of defense. After a victor is decided, one party would approach this place. If it is the Huizhong Mercenaries, then fire immediately, if its the other force, then decide based on their intention.]

"This is 03, there is a situation in the basement. The situation is unique." The voice transmitted from the public channel.

"Roger, we'll head right down." Sun Jiao looked at Jiang Chen.

"Mhmm." Jiang Chen nodded, took out the tactile rifle ideal for compact enclosures, and followed her towards the basement.

The wall in the hallway was drawn with weird graffiti, the bright colors and dark wall formed an odd contrast.

When he passed a classroom, Jiang Chen saw the chairs and tables thrown in the corner through the window, along with the cracked screens at the front of the classroom. There were two messy sleeping bags and a polyethylene digital table on its side. Blood marks were on the ground, but it looked like it was from a long time ago.

If it was not so messy, the classroom looked similar to what he saw in the virtual reality training chamber.

"I heard that before the war, they liked to group the kids together to teach? I really don't understand the purpose of it," Sun Jiao glanced at the classroom and mumbled.

[Group the kids together?]

Jiang Chen paused for a minute when he heard the voice from the private channel. He couldn't help but smile.

"I am not going to say I don't understand."

Sun Jiao did receive virtual reality lessons when she was in the survival base.

"Oh? The virtual reality training system allows necessary knowledge to be understood in a short period of time. If something can be learned in 1200 hours, what's the point of taking 12 years?" Sun Jiao curled her upper lip contemptuously.

"Are you jealous right now?" Jiang Chen laughed.

"Shut up." Sun Jiao pouted as she kicked the debris up, and turned around to give him a dirty look.

Although they were wearing helmets, Jiang Chen could still imagine her expression.

"Maybe it was to enjoy the process."

She wouldn't understand because she spent her childhood in a survival base.

Now to think about it, although he always complained about graduate school, when that moment finally came, Jiang Chen admitted that he did look forward to graduation. But after stepping into the real world, he still felt a longing for the times in the past.

Maybe that was the happiest time? No office politics, even if there was a fight, the next day everything will be back to usual. Even if the teacher was mad, the only consequence was a lecture and not losing the bonus, though he didn't need to worry about that now.

"Enjoy the process? What's the use of that?" Jiang Chen couldn't tell if the voice was full of longing or contempt.

"Not a lot of use, just like how someone turned the world into this mess. Not a lot of use." Jiang Chen glanced at the teacher's office along with the way, it was also a mess inside.

"I don't understand," Sun Jiao murmured.

"To put it in simple words, if you can meet some interesting friends in school, you learn to deal with people. Mhmm. If you received that type of education, you wouldn't tie me up during our first encounter."

"Do you want to die! Stop remembering that." Sun Jiao's face turned slightly red as she complained cutely.

Jiang Chen smiled, he only wanted to tease her.

At the end of the hallway was a metal door, the lock was cut by the welding device on the power armor. There were a few words written.

<Fallout Facility>

Was it because of the escalated tension back then? Jiang Chen remembered that the school in the modern world didn't have

those.

"If possible, could you take me there? From your side." Before they entered the door, Sun Jiao quite abruptly opened her mouth.

He blanked for a moment before a genuine smile appeared on his face.

"Mhmm, of course."

Chapter 107: Bandit's Toy

A moldy smell swept across their face.

Maybe it was Jiang Chen's illusion, but he even smelled a pungent, disgusting odor.

<Air filter activated>

Now it feels much better.

"I can guess what this place is," Sun Jiao suddenly said.

"Oh? What place?"

"A place to store their trophies." Her voice was calm, without much fluctuation, but Jiang Chen could still hear the disdain she tried to cover up.

The plastic walls were well insulated as the temperature in the basement was slightly higher than outside. The lamps on the side of the hallway provided the lighting to the place. The place still had electricity.

Seeing that the boss and captain came down, the 03 soldier in power armor in front of the basement door saluted.

"What's going on?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows but realized

instantly.

It was living hell.

The room previously used as a fallout shelter was completely remodified. The polyethylene door was attached with a massive lock. The people captive inside the room could be seen through the tiny window.

That's right, kept like cattle.

The soulless naked woman sat there, Jiang Chen couldn't tell if she was alive or not. The white stains and the dark bruises and scars on her body made it hard to fathom the pain she experienced. There were at least one hundred rooms like this!

Each door had a number. Some rooms were empty with only dried blood inside. Some rooms had multiple people inside.

Beautiful, ugly, able bodied or disabled, body modified or tattooed with heinous words...

Jiang Chen looked away as he could no longer stand the scene.

"The number on the door should belong to a bandit, and they should keep the keys there. The people or things inside are their trophies or sex toys. They usually kill them once impregnated, or purposely impregnate them to unleash their monstrous desire..." Sun Jiao said emotionlessly.

"You do know quite a lot," Jiang Chen took a long breath of air and said in a troubled voice.

"Common sense on the wasteland. Sometimes, you are really charming." Sun Jiao suddenly looked playfully at Jiang Chen and smiled.

"Haha, my pleasure." He forced a laugh because he was not in a delighted mood, and he continued to walk emotionlessly.

"What the fu*k, there is a man inside?"

Jiang Chen took a few more steps before looking at the door in disdain and moved away.

[Some weird fetishes here.]

The man inside seemed to have noticed the noise outside, he opened his wry eyes and looked outside.

In a glimpse, as if he suddenly got a burst of energy, he smashed the door to draw the attention of Jiang Chen.

"Wait! You are the enemy of those bandits right! Can you let me out?"

Seeing that the man in power armor turned around to look at

him, Chu Nan gulped and said rapidly.

"My name is Chu Nan, an ex-pilot at Liuding town. I was captured by these bandits a month ago."

[Virgin (Chu Nan)?] Jiang Chen held in his laughter.

"Liuding town? Then how did you fly here?" Sun Jiao was surprised.

"Mission failed," Chu Nan answered in awkwardness.

Jiang Chen opened the helmet and examined him with a weird look.

"Why did the bandits put you, a man here?"

Chu Nan paused for a moment, and then forced a smile.

"I don't know, maybe sell me for a good price? But Liuding definitely doesn't lack pilots."

Jiang Chen paused for a moment as well and then smiled.

"My name is Jiang Chen. I also don't need pilots. Once the battle is over outside, we'll let you go."

There would be too many variables if he just let him go now. Since it was already dark outside, he would have to wait till tomorrow. Anyways, there was no difference in letting him go now or tomorrow morning.

"Give me a gun, I can still fight, I can help you guys," Chu Nan gulped as he proposed to Jiang Chen.

"No need." There was no need to add variables to the battle. An extra light infantry would not change the battle.

Jiang Chen shook his head as he prepared to walk forward.

"Can you give me a nutrient supply? I haven't –"

An instant noodle smashed precisely into the window, Jiang Chen said in annoyance, "I am not in the best mood right now, so you better shut up for a while, or I will forget to open the door tomorrow."

[Quiet now?]

The crisp sound of instant noodle and chewing transmitted through the door.

Jiang Chen curled his mouth up as he was prepared to move forward.

Dong, dong!

At that moment, the abrupt smashing of a heavy door was heard. A monster-like vicious look passed through the tiny window, a rather beautiful face was revealed, spiteful and twisted.

He looked at her in shock as it was the first woman he saw that still had energy.

Sun Jiao was even more shocked.

She opened her helmet and walked up to the door in disbelief.

"You know her?" Jiang Chen looked at her astonished, and then glanced at the "monster" wanting to jump away.

A bitter smile appeared on Sun Jiao's face.

"Somewhat. Her name is Zhou Xiaoxia, my old friend at Liuding town? Or just an acquaintance. She was a lone wolf with a skilled dagger and pistol skills. We teamed up together before, temporarily."

"Then how did she –"

"Captured, tortured on a daily basis, and finally lost her sanity... She probably has gone insane already."

Sun Jiao reached her hand out, but just before she touched the door, the woman leaped at the door like a malicious animal, viciously flashing her teeth.

She retracted her hand.

Jiang Chen gulped lightly.

Is this the fate of a lone wolf wandering in the wasteland?

"So, the filthy lone wolves on the wasteland are usually old virgins, because once captured, you'll never be human again."

Sun Jiao suddenly smiled, she pulled out the tactile rifle and aimed into the small window, as she quietly looked at the monster-like pupils.

Jiang Chen noticed her hands were shaking.

"Do you need my help?" He asked gently.

Even for people who were accustomed to killing, they have people they were unwilling to pull the trigger on. He kind of understood the feeling. The feeling where she wanted to end her companion's pain, but unable to do so because of past interactions.

Sun Jiao thought for a moment and then smiled.

"It's okay –"

Boom!

A massive explosion suddenly diffused inside as the ceiling began to shake, the lights were flickering.

"This is 07. We are under attack! They are equipped with heavy firearms, requesting assistance!"

The explosions continued to transmit from the surface, the soulless women in the cages were even alerted and twitched.

"01, 02 provide cover fire on the roof, 04-08 search for cover and return fire." Sun Jiao calmly ordered in the public channel.

"Dammit, who is the enemy?!"

"It's definitely not the Huizhong Mercenaries, they don't have such intense firepower," Chu Nan leaned against the door as he quickly explained, the look in his eyes seemed to plead for Jiang Chen to let him out first.

"It's the mutated human! It's the mutated human force! Dammit, how did we encounter these things here!" Angry shouts transmitted from the communication channel, the intensity of the battle could be deduced from the shaking blast.

The situation was critical as Jiang Chen did not bother with Chu Nan's plead. He dashed directly to the stairs and signaled Sun Jiao, and 03 to follow.

Sun Jiao glanced at the Zhou Xiaoxia flashing her teeth at her and put down the rifle. She didn't say anything as she silently left the basement.

She didn't pull the trigger.

"Dammit!" Chu Nan smashed the door as he witnessed the group of people leave the basement.

He could only pray that the man called Jiang Chen wins.

At the same time, he suddenly noticed that the monster-like woman was staring at him.

He abruptly remembered the hardcore po*n scenes yesterday. The bald Zhou Guoping took his pawns, lined them up, and then pressed the bit*h-like woman against the wall, they cursed derogatory words while they...

To be honest, he was hard.

Chu Nan shook his head as he wearily sat on the bed.

To his surprise, through the tiny window, he noticed that the

woman was also smiling?

He suddenly felt his throat being stuffed, he opened his mouth but didn't say anything.

When the person in the power armor said her name, he already realized who she was.

However, in the month he was kept here, he didn't recognize her at all!

Speaking of this, she hasn't visited Liuding town for a while. Since last winter?

Zhou Xiaoxia was known as the devil hunter, the screw bar's goddess at Liuding. She would always have a drink there when she passed by Liuding town.

There was a lot of people thirsty for her beauty, but none picked the rose with thorns.

But now, the charm was covered by filth, and the audacious yet gorgeous face had lost all of its liveliness.

Dammit, he did fall in love with her at first sight.

Chapter 108: The Mutated Humans

The Mutated Humans - like the cannibals, was another species not accepted by humans.

A giant figure, strong muscles, an ugly, twisted face, and grayish green skin. Just like the monsters from <Lord of the Ring>.

The FEV virus in their cell structure had given them an insane regeneration ability. From some perspectives, they could be considered immortals unless they asked for their own death. At the same time, the ferocious FEV also made them immune to any diseases, and free from the risk of radiation. They boast themselves as the "perfect human" and praise that the heaven like wasteland belonged to them.

Of course, the above was was not the reason they were hated. There were plenty of arrogant, ugly people, and with enough radiation dust, the head was bound to become abnormal.

The survivors disdained them because they were di*kless.

Not only that, they liked to capture people, and turn them into the same di*kless creatures they were.

The inability to reproduce was their only flaw.

Also, because of the limited life span of their DNA. Despite a higher regeneration rate, which means the cell division was

occurring at an abnormally high rate, this resulted in a shorter life span.

They would rarely age but would experience a violent death in their 50s. The more injuries they've had, the shorter their life span. If they wanted to continue their species, they must capture people on the wasteland, and put them in a vile and pickle them to turn the captured people into the same ugly, mutated humans as them, regardless of gender. To increase efficiency, they would force breed the males and females. The newborn baby would then be turned into mutated humans as well. They would then raise the newborn and repeat the same reproduction cycle. This inhumane act was even more obnoxious than killing people. Obviously, people would rather get their heads chopped off than their di*ks chopped off. So naturally, the mutated human was top of the blacklist on every survival camp, the Sixth Street included.

These "di*kless" things were the arch enemy of all humans

Even if they couldn't conduct trade with other survivors, they still lived a comfortable life.

Nutrient supply? They could produce it, but they rather not eat those things. They hunt for mutants, and then eat the highly poisonous flesh raw, and use their insane immunity system to process the poison. Even the disgusting Roshan, they could feast like its flesh was a delicious meal.

Firearms? They were born in the underground military facility. Because of the involvement of the government, the military did finally receive freedom. They controlled the entire military base

and was considered the organization with the amplest amount of firearms in Wanghai City.

It was true that based on the adaptability of this world, they had the right to be arrogant. If it were not for the fact that they couldn't reproduce, they would have without a doubt conquered the world.

But Jiang Chen was facing these lunatics right now.

-

"Dammit, their firepower is too strong!" Ma Zhongchen tightly pressed behind the cover as he could barely gather his breath due to the oppressing fire from the heavy machine gun.

400 meters out, whoever had the more intense firepower was the daddy.

The grayish-green colored mutated humans were wrapped in ammo. The revolving machine gun furiously unleashed its power on the main building. Their muscular body enabled them to fire the heavy firearm without being disturbed by the heavy recoil.

Without the need to wear kinetic skeletons to increase their weight, they could use their pure strength to wear the almost one-ton C-plastic steel armor. If it were not for the exposed joints uncovered, the light weapon would practically cause no harm.

"Fu*k, it's the mutated humans." Sun Jiao's face looked troubled, she carried the 72mm anti-tank cannon and leaned behind the cover.

These heavy machine guns could already pose a threat to the power armors, the intense waves of bullets forced them to take cover.

Both feet locked onto the ground changed into AP bombs, she reached out of the cover and immediately fired.

The bomb with a trail of orange fire scattered across the sky as it smashed right into a mutated human.

The AP bomb without a doubt penetrated the armor and ripped the mutated human into pieces.

The effect was visible when they realized that the opponent also possessed heavy weaponry. This caused the mutated humans to become more cautious with their attack. The only downfall was they began to focus their fire in Sun Jiao's direction.

Sun Jiao unlocked her feet as she initiated the turbine engine and barely avoided the rain of bullets.

The ferocious firepower from the machine gun almost shredded the wall she took cover at into pieces.

"Dammit, do their bullets not cost money?" Jiang Chen gritted

his teeth, he leaned against the wall and continued to shoot while constantly taking cover behind different barriers.

"Fu*k! Why are they focusing on me." Sun Jiao dragged the 2-meter long cannon as she awkwardly hid behind the stairs, unable to peek out.

Other than heavy machine guns, they also possessed at least four recoilless cannons!

Their firepower was not on the same level, the only heavy weaponry on Jiang Chen's side was the 72mm anti-tank cannon. Although the revolving heavy machine gun was powerful, because the other side had already suppressed their fire, it is hard to regain the control.

There were at least 20 mutated humans with machine guns.

"Should we drive the armored vehicle over, the 20mm machine gun could..."

"Are you crazy, they have four recoilless cannons!"

"Fu*k, what to do..." Sun Jiao bit her lip.

"Retreat! Retreat! Fu*k! Prepare to fight in the building!" There was no time to hesitate, Jiang Chen decisively took control as he shouted in the public channel.

Sun Jiao quickly realized the situation too.

[That's right, if they can't win in distance, then fight in close range! If the mutated human need captives, there is no reason that they wouldn't chase.]

"Roger!"

The light infantry that was being suppressed on the ground by the firepower began to retreat. Then it was the power armor soldiers.

The mutated human took the upper advantage in the first wave of exchange fire, there were three casualties on Jiang Chen's side, with minor injuries on the power armor soldiers.

Two casualties on the opposing side, one was blown to pieces by Sun Jiao. The other practically died because of bad luck. With the regeneration strength of the mutated human, unless it were shots to the head or heart, they would not die.

It was already pitch dark in the night. Because of Jiang Chen's retreat, the mutated human began to cease fire.

They couldn't destroy the building as their purpose was to capture people. In this case, they had to enter the main building to combat with Jiang Chen.

"A total of 31 people, with 19 heavy machine guns, they are in the building already." After activating fury, all the hearts appeared in his vision.

Fury deactivated.

He took a deep breath as his brain regained clarity. After the battle in the virtual world, he could already freely control fury without the need of a tranquilizer.

The only disadvantage of the ability was that the higher the number of the enemy targets, the more difficult it was to control his emotion. Once the violence was built up to a certain point, he could even lose control. Just like Sun Jiao's special ability would force her to be weak, these hidden genetic abilities were never meant to be the gift from the higher beings, but rather a curse to the unholy.

The light infantry was completely useless at this point. Sun Jiao ordered them to retreat to the door.

Ten power armor soldiers against 31 mutated humans, that was a large discrepancy.

But would Jiang Chen play this game fair and square?

The Fishbone base lacked a lot of things, but crystal was not one of them.

Chapter 109: Tragedy

"Enemy unit arrived on the second floor."

"Fire!"

"Roger!"

Dadada-!

In the darkness, fire sparks suddenly erupted as the mutated humans rushing into the hallway were caught off guard.

The polyethylene tables and chairs were thrown into the hallway as the power armored soldiers used that to take cover and unleash their firepower at the mutated humans.

The weight of the mutated human's armor was mostly focused in the front part; their intense firepower made it necessary to consider running away. But once the distance has been shortened, their fatal weakness was exposed. Although they were not completely unprepared, when they stepped on the stairs, their center of gravity leaning forward uncontrollably exposed their defenseless backs to the machine guns of the power armor soldiers. Almost instantly, they experienced heavy casualties.

"Fire at will!"

Jiang Chen carried the tactical rifle as he gritted his teeth and continuously pulled the trigger.

The mutated human's charging momentum suddenly came to a halt. They began to lift their guns up to fire back, but shooting up was always a disadvantage as they were unable to return fire. Despite their muscle being able to carry the weight of the C-type plastic steel, it was too much for the spine. If they had to shoot up, that means their center of gravity must be shifted back, and all the weight will be concentrated on the spine.

"Nice job! How did you know their weakness?" Sun Jiao said in excitement while she continued to pull the trigger.

"Would you believe me if I said I guessed it?" He unloaded the empty magazine and smashed a new one into the cartilage. Jiang Chen aimed at the neck of a mutated human.

Dada--!

The bullets penetrated through the neck of the mutated human, creating a splash of blood as the bullets broke his neck. He fell onto the ground like soft mud and stopped breathing.

Despite the incredible body, they were still human after all. Even if they surpassed the limitation of DNA, they could not overcome the barrier of life.

"They have entered Area A already; we lost control of the left

wing on the second floor." Noisy shouting was heard from the public channel.

"Retreat to the third floor." Sun Jiao decisively ordered.

"Roger!"

They can't allow the battle to take place in the hallway, once one wing lost control, the other wing had to retreat as well.

The revolving machine gun began to spin on the right hand, the left dragged the tactical rifle as the machine gun spat out a constant fire.

They kept their fire suppression as they retreated.

Once the defense line was compromised, they had to reestablish it on another floor. If they engaged fire with the mutated humans in the hallway, they would be the ones overwhelmed.

[Dammit, I should have brought some heat sensor grenades with me.] He saw the <Power armor 21% damaged symbol> on the full sensory screen as he cursed in his mind.

Who would have thought this crusade would be this problematic? Against the cold-blooded zombies and agile mutants, heat sensor grenades were practically useless.

At this moment, the floor violently shook. The explosion from the east side was audible even from the other wing.

"O3 is down!"

"Dammit, it's recoilless cannon!"

Jiang Chen watched with his own eyes as the O3 number became crossed and marked with <Heart Ceased> <Offline> symbol. Although he didn't know the person's name, seeing that his comrade has fallen, it was an indescribable feeling.

Although he was aware that there would be casualties in every battle.

"Retreat! Retreat to the roof!" Sun Jiao shouted in the public channel.

They couldn't wait any longer. A T-3 power armor was worth over ten thousand crystal, and if it was busted, then there was one power armor less.

The mutated human saw that they gained an upper advantage as they began to shout out in joy. They attacked the stairs roaring. Even if they had ten people along the way, the 10 to 1 casualty ratio did not scare them because they firmly believe that once these metal junks were forced on the roof, they would turn into scrap metal under their firepower.

The armor in front of their chest was comparable to the T-3 C-type plastic armor. Technology? They didn't need it!

"Dammit, why do they seem to be on drugs." Sun Jiao clinched her teeth as the 72mm anti-tank cannon launched repeatedly. The AP bomb directly penetrated the concrete stairs and blew the mutated human into two pieces.

"Initiate final plans." Jiang Chen met with Sun Jiao already as they took cover at the other end of the stairs. They leaned tightly against the wall as they shot with the tactical rifle.

Bullets flew and carried the trail of faint gray smoke.

"But, but that is 5400 crystals." Sun Jiao's face appeared as if she was about to cry.

"Enough! A T-3 is 13000 crystals."

Sun Jiao clinched her teeth as she reluctantly made her last shot, and shouted in the public channel.

"Retreat! Initiate final plan!"

"Roger."

The defense line could no longer hold on to the sixth floor, but there were still at least twenty mutated humans attacking. They

already abandoned their plan of just piling on bodies and began to act more cautiously as they continuously fired the recoilless cannons and self-made grenades. The saving grace was that while they had almost an infinite amount of bullets, their grenades and bombs were limited, or else there was no way this battle could be fought.

Finally, the mutated humans rushed onto the sixth floor, it forced all the power armor soldiers into the hallway.

But at this moment, a scene the mutated human didn't expect happened.

The metal junks all jumped out of the window as the turbine engine began to shoot out a blue trail of flames and carried them downstairs. At the same time, explosions began to erupt on the fifth and sixth floors. The hidden aluminum heat agent blew the stairs into pieces.

They could fly?

The stairs were destroyed?

However, they had no time to react.

<Backup fuel rod self-destruction program>

<Initiated>

Sun Jiao, in pain, pressed the confirm button, she regretted not carrying more explosives with her.

How wasteful was it to use the fuel rod costing 500 crystals, and 100 crystals to charge explosives?

Boom!!

The red flames began to blossom in the air, the almost liquefied fire waves instantly emerged the entire floor and erupted out from the previously black window.

He felt the waves of heat on the surface of his armor. Jiang Chen watched the blinding explosion, astonished.

Although it was not the first time he used fuel rod as explosives, it was his first time witnessing this effects of the explosion.

"Beautiful firework." He subconsciously whistled.

"A firework worth 5000 crystals." Sun Jiao was still bitter.

"Do you think that they haven't considered that we could fly?" Jiang Chen asked as he watched the concrete begin to melt.

"Not all power armors are equipped with flying engines. Usually, only paratroopers would be fitted with the flying engine. The trade

off for mobility is armor. The B-type armor used by land mobile armors are much stronger than the lighter C-type plastic armor. At the same time, it weighs much more than the 300 kg T-3, it usually weighs one ton. Also, the mutated humans are not known for their intelligence."

The high temperature also ignited the plastic chairs placed in the hallway. The thick black smoke was quite visible even in the night. The power armors gradually landed, looking at the fire above them.

There was no doubt about their victory. Sun Jiao carried the anti-tank cannon on her shoulder.

"B-type armor? What are these things exactly." Jiang Chen was curious.

"Material strength grade, SABCDEF, seven levels in total. It is also used in other industries. It is complicated to explain. You don't know this after being here for this long?" Sun Jiao rolled her eyes.

"Seems like you know a lot," Jiang Chen nonchalantly said as he glanced at the fire that was beginning to fade.

The building was well-engineered. Even after experiencing an explosion of this scale, the main structure remained intact.

"Common knowledge," Sun Jiao mumbled and then opened the

public channel. "Prepare to enter, group into 3s by number. Group A head to floor five and six to search for any mutated humans that have not died, only leave one alive."

"Roger." They saluted as 01,02,03 carried their tactical rifles into the building.

"Team B, go collect the power armor on floor three." Although destroyed, a lot of parts were of high value.

"Roger."

"Team C, clean up the battlefield at the experimental building." After finishing her orders, Sun Jiao opened the helmet and playfully threw Jiang Chen a wink, and then closed the helmet and shouted in the private channel, "Follow your sister."

"Is your butt aching?" Jiang Chen said fiercely.

He heard her giggling voice.

[This girl is becoming more naughty.]

-

Bullet holes were everywhere on the wall, Jiang Chen's force left the ones on the north side. The south side should be from the encounter between the mutated humans and Huizhong

Mercenaries.

It was evident that the mutated humans won.

There were bloodstains everywhere, along with severed limbs and flesh.

The pungent smell in the air and gruesome scene on the ground only made Jiang Chen slightly frown. Was it because he was used to death? Or only because it was too dark to see?

He would rather believe it was the latter.

Behind the back door, there were three modified trucks parked. They were bolted with thick steel plates along with a heavy machine attached to the top.

"Quite a gruesome battle." Sun Jiao locked her eyebrows as she locked away a broken hand.

"Don't those di*kless things want it alive?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Still alive, without a hand. Usually, normal people are just for breeding purposes." As she said this, Sun Jiao walked behind the truck and opened the door.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen saw her stop.

His heart started to ache, but he didn't have the time to open his mouth.

Like a bomb, the figure was blown away.

"Roar-!"

The roaring sound came from inside the truck as it almost shattered Jiang Chen's eardrums.

He couldn't hear any sounds at that moment.

"C team encountered enemies! Requesting assistance!" o8 quickly pulled out the rifle and began to fire.

But the bullets seemed to have hit a metal plate as sparks popped up on the metal board, casting an unsettling feel.

Jiang Chen, who was still trying to recover from what had happened, saw, with the glimpse of his eyes, the explosive and agile figure get blown into the air.

Noise.

Color.

Everything in the world seemed to have escaped from his body.

<Heart Ceased>

Sun Jiao...

His head was empty.

In an instant, Jiang Chen's eyes were covered in blood.

Chapter 110: Awakening

Death.

There was intense pain, as though his heart had been ripped open.

Scenes from his memory flickered like dusty, old photos. The audacious and naughty, yet gentle and caring face began to yellow.

Then it turned gray.

The ferocious mutated human roared and flipped the warhammer in its hand before facing Jiang Chen, whose mind had gone completely blank.

It was fury, but beyond fury.

Anger seemed to have broken a lock in his heart, shattering it.

But his mind was clear and conscious.

[Kill.]

[Kill him.]

Thoughts of slaughter.

Roar!

The explosive shadow dashed at him, the raised warhammer gleaming with a faint blue light.

It was a power warhammer, equipped with a power storage system. It could release energy upon impact, and the damage was comparable to that of an anti-tank cannon, making power armor rather useless against it.

Anger did not numb his thoughts; he never had such clarity in his life.

His thoughts passed in 0.01 seconds, and the tactical flashlight in front of him opened instantaneously.

The blinding ray pierced the pupils of the mutated human and deadened his vision.

At the same time, the turbine engine opened, and he began to glide.

What followed was a deafening screech, a challenge that smashed into the ground. Jiang Chen maneuvered the power armor and dodged the thunderous hit. He raised his right arm, and the machine gun with revolving tridents fired rapidly.

Tatata—!

Bullets swarmed out, each impact casting sparks on the mutilated human's back.

The sound of the striking metal began to fade. The violent firepower did not damage him in the slightest, being reflected instead.

"Roar—!" The mutated human shouted in pain. He dragged the power warhammer up from the concrete floor, his eyes the size of bells shooting out a terrifying light.

From the sparks and flashlight, he could see the mutated human's pitch-black back.

A dark mutated human?

Information from the database was displayed on his pupil.

"Lead skin? I don't know how it works, but—"

The black figure leaped at Jiang Chen once more. The warhammer smashed down like a meteor with four trails of faint blue light.

The turbine engine at maximum output, Jiang Chen made a curved trajectory to avoid the attack midair. He then braked,

sparks screeching out from the bottom of his feet.

Without hesitation, he pulled out the tactical rifle and aimed it at the mutant's head.

The second it turned to look for its target, Jiang Chen fired.

Dadada—!

It was still ineffective; it had a ridiculous defense even on its head. With a fierce shout, the mutated human swung its power warhammer at Jiang Chen from his flank.

There was no time to dodge, but his heart was devoid of any anxiety.

He deployed the wheels on the soles of his shoes once more while a nitrogen shield expanded outward like an umbrella.

The power warhammer smashed through the thick waves of nitrogen and hammered on the front of his armor.

Jiang Chen flew explosively, but with the help of the nitrogen shield, he was pushed out rather than ejected with great force.

The T-3 power armor weighing three hundred kilograms was very light, and most of the impact was not absorbed by him. Instead, it was transformed into energy that helped him recoil

backwards.

The wheels turned rapidly, and after flying for approximately ten meters, Jiang Chen calmly braked with a screech of metal on the ground.

Boom!

The power armor directly smashed into the first floor of the experimental building. He landed awkwardly in the hallway.

"Energy of impact, 494000 joules." Straining, Jiang CHen raised his dazed head and read the stats on his pupils.

<Warning! Power armor damage: 54%>

The entire front of the armor caved in. The turbine engine on the left shoulder and left side of the waist were destroyed. The life detection device was damaged, and the communication device was malfunctioning.

He silently glanced at the rows of <Offline> symbols that represented the team, then at the jumping red symbol. Jiang Chen closed the notifications and pulled out the tactical dagger.

"Roar!"

The roaring sound advanced, as he had expected. It was clear that

the gorilla-like monster was not ready to let its prey go.

And neither did Jiang Chen.

Like a gust of furious wind, the black figure raised the power warhammer and smashed it in his direction.

Flames burst out of what remained of the turbine engines. Jiang Chen slid across the ground as though being dragged to avoid the power warhammer's hit. Finally, he stood up shakily. Rock debris had scraped the power armor which clanked continuously.

The turbine engines had exceeded their output limit and stalled, but it was enough.

Jiang Chen, who had just escaped danger, did not back down but rather dragged the busted power armor and dashed at the mutated human.

He then furiously stabbed his tactical dagger forward.

Conservation of energy.

He noticed a while ago that the second the mutated human raises its hammer, the muscles over its entire body seemed to expand as though it was straining to perform the action.

The warhammer itself was not heavy, but when it was raised,

even the mutated human had to use all of its energy to do so.

Although Jiang CHen did not know the energy principle behind it, his instincts told him that this was the key to the power warhammer's charge, as well as its weakness!

The mutated human was struggling to raise the hammer, so it was unable to react to the attack.

The opportunity was a small window of time.

The sound of metal screeching echoed in the air the moment his dagger came into contact with its skin, leaving a trail of sparks. Jiang Chen clenched his teeth as his muscles expanded to the limits. The out put of the power armor was also operating at its maximum.

"Roar—!"

The power warhammer in the hands of the mutated human stalled and fell to the ground. He flung away the left arm that was stabbed with the dagger and smashed his fist towards Jiang Chen's head.

Jiang Chen lowered his body to avoid the hit, then leaped at the chest of the mutated human. With power output at a maximum, both of his hands locked onto its shoulder. He clamped the roaring, fighting mutated human against the wall.

The misshapen face twisted in anger, and its red teeth that seemed as though they would pop out were even more gruesome.

<Energy remaining: 53%>

Jiang Chen, also furious, had no color in his face. He looked at the energy bar and what remained before activating a red button.

<Self-destruction program initiated. 20 seconds remaining.>

The internal fuel rod began to shake as the stable contents became agitated.

<Feet locked>

The metal strips penetrated the ground.

<Power armor released>

A thin opening appeared at the back of the power armor through which Jiang Chen jumped out.

He met its frightening gaze with only grimness in his eyes.

The pitch-black mutated human desperately tried to push the power armor away, but it was futile. The power armor was locked down and held him in its grip against the wall. His left hand was

useless because of the injury, and with his joints locked, it didn't matter how much brute force he used. He did not budge.

Jiang Chen walked away 100 meters and stopped. He turned and began a silent countdown.

Strangely, he did not feel any emotional fluctuations.

Hatred, fear, the joy of victory? Or even anger itself...

It was as though all of his emotions were stripped from his body.

The fire erupted, and the blinding light covered his vision.

Shhhhhh!

He felt a slight pain on his face. Upon touching it, he realized it was blood.

His face was cut open by the metal shrapnel. He quietly gazed at the blood on his finger.

A bomb worth 13000 crystals should be enough to blow that monster up.

From the fire, a figure emerged.

Flesh exposed, its skin was lit up brightly by the red flames which had already melted the lead skin. The daunting bloody holes were likely the work of the metal fragments. The muscle on its left arm had been nearly stripped clean.

If it were any normal human, they would have been dead.

The mutated human?

Jiang Chen silently retrieved the 11 tactical pistol that he had on him for a long time. He aimed at the figure walking towards him from afar.

He pulled the trigger.

Bang!

No reaction. The bullet may have penetrated his flesh, but it did not stop him from moving forward.

Shots continued to be fired.

The mutated human used its right hand to cover its heart, the damaged left arm to cover its face. The horrifying teeth could be seen from behind its fingers, and Jiang Chen could imagine the viciousness on his face.

There was no time to run, especially since he never had the

intention to do so.

Fear?

What was that?

The mutated human was finally in front of him.

Jiang Chen pulled the trigger, only to hear a faint "clank" sound.

The bullets ran out?

He lifted his hand, his hollow eyes staring emotionlessly at the mutated human.

When all emotions had been stripped from the body, what would it feel like to face death? He suddenly thought of the insane intermediate artificial intelligence that had repeated countless experiments to obtain emotion. When it faced death, did it feel calm?

Out of his peripheral vision, he caught sight of the giant hand being raised.

Would he get squished?

Jiang Chen lowered his head, removing the cartridge.

[Seems like I lost...]

At that moment, a homing noise almost shattered his eardrums.

Boom!

"Awe!"

Flames exploded from the left shoulder of the mutated human before it could release its pained scream. It was blown onto the ground by the force of the bomb. The 72mm AP bomb, with a power great enough to penetrate through steel armor, hollowed his muscles and nearly ripped every organ and muscle in his body. But even after this, he still had not died and made desperate attempts to stand.

Jiang Chen was shocked.

Not from the mutated human's ridiculous life force.

He stared blankly at where the bomb had originated.

Chapter 111: Another Use of Interdimensional Travel

Her heartbeats resumed.

[Seems like I was dead for a while... But how did I survive?]

There was no time for Sun Jiao to think, however. In her murky vision, she saw the mutated human walking towards Jiang Chen.

Her vision was covered by dark blood, the entire front of her armor had caved in tight against her chest, and her left arm was out of commission from the broken plastic steel armor lacerating her flesh. The exposed wiring flashed with unsettling sparks, and on her pupils was a daunting list of red alerts . She would most likely have to cut off the entire left arm of the suit to extricate her broken left hand, but the ability should be able to heal it.

Sun Jiao panted, her clouded eyes half-open as she tried to lock her aim onto the head of the mutated human.

Its heart and head were the only weaknesses.

Boom!

The 72mm anti-tank cannon in her right hand fired, the cannon whipping upwards. The trail of orange flame directly homed in on the mutated human that was about to execute Jiang Chen.

[Made it?]

[...Seems to be off.]

Seeing it miss the weak spots, Sun Jiao raised her already straining right hand and aimed the cannon at the mutated human struggling to stand.

She pulled the trigger.

Clank—

A bitter smile appeared on her face.

The clip was empty.

She glanced at her trapped left hand. A liquid, perhaps cold sweat, rolled down her blood-covered face.

It was pointless if it didn't hit the head or the heart. Even with a broken left hand and half a stomach, it wouldn't die. It was not an average mutated human; it was a variant with lead skin. These mutated humans received special modifications that made their skin into lead. Not only did it make their defense far superior to the average mutated human's, but their strength and life force also far exceeded normal limits.

Their only weakness was the lead-addled brain. They would kill instinctively, and so they were often used like dogs by the same species.

The clip was at her waist, but how could she change it out with one hand?

"Dammit! Jiang Chen..." Sun Jiao anxiously stared at Jiang Chen, her lips turning pale from biting it so harshly.

At that moment, she could see the faint Jiang Chen looking in her direction.

-

[She is still alive. Terrific...]

Jiang Chen's lips slightly trembled, feeling emotional.

It was as if his heart was full again.

[Fury deactivated? No, it's not fury. Whatever, who cares?]

Jiang Chen turned his head to look at the mutated human struggling to stand. He met the ferocious stare.

The flesh was healing at an unimaginable rate. The lead skin

covering the head and chest had already grown back.

Its threatening smile seemed to mock Jiang Chen. The mutated human could already sense that the man in front of him had no more tricks to play.

Jiang Chen looked down at the pistol in his hand.

Even the tactical rifle on the power armor could not penetrate its skin. The 11 tactical pistol would be futile as well.

Out of tricks? No... There was still a lethal trick he hadn't used yet.

"Roar!" The mutated human growled as he watched Jiang Chen approach.

For no reason at all, he felt anxious.

The head and heart were already covered by the newly grown lead skin, but when he saw the man walking towards him, he felt an instinctive fear.

Jiang Chen drew closer to the mutated human and cracked a smile. Placing the gun in his pocket, he retrieved a crystal from the storage dimension. After the interdimensional bracelet's energy was charged to full, he flung the now-lusterless crystal away.

He leisurely squatted down, staring into the bell-sized eyeballs, then took a deep breath and smiled lightheartedly. "Should I take you to play in another world?"

He slapped his hand on the mutated human's shoulder.

Upon finishing his sentence, both of them disappeared from Sun Jiao's sight.

"...Interdimensional travel?" Sun Jiao stared blankly at the place Jiang Chen and the mutated human had disappeared from.

She remembered the dead hamster; living creatures were unable to travel with him.

But she also faintly remembered that he mentioned it took 40% energy to travel once.

What would happen now that he brought along the mutated human?

She felt unsettled.

The homing engine turbine began to ring from afar. Power-armored soldiers were rushing to the scene. They'd been caught in a crossfire with the remaining mutated humans. As soon as they solved the problem, they quickly rushed over.

"Where did the light infantry go?" Sun Jiao asked in the communication channel.

"Still at the gate."

"Good... Get me out first." If someone saw this scene, she would have to shut them up, eternally.

She was different from Jiang Chen; she didn't feel much guilt when killing.

The power-armored soldiers walked forward, took out a welding gun, and cut through the caved-in metal on her left arm.

Sun Jiao gritted her teeth as she crawled out from the back of the power armor, then looked at where Jiang Chen had disappeared.

She began to feel more and more anxious, her uncertainty creeping into her face.

[Why is he still not back?]

"Captain, what do we do now?"

"Stay put and set up camp. 01, go take a tent from the armored truck and cover that area." Sun Jiao pointed at where Jiang Chen had last been seen.

"Understood." The power-armored soldier with the 01 symbol on his left arm received the order and left.

"The rest of you establish the temporary camp in the main building.... We might need to stay here for a few days," she added after a pause.

"Understood."

She stared at the empty spot again as she bit her lips and clenched her fists.

-

It was already the third day.

Seeing that they were victorious, the surrounding team headed back, but some still remained; for example, Zhao Gang.

"No, my wife is still underground." Zhao Gang could not wait any longer as he slapped his leg and stood facing the direction of the main building.

The scared Ma Zhongchen immediately grabbed on to him.

"Are you crazy! Do you not see how she looks right now..."

Ma Zhongchen discreetly pointed at the figure sitting in front of the tent.

The lifeless eyes were covered with permafrost. The lonely figure sat there quietly wiping the gun.

It was not the look of someone who was open to conversation.

Zhao Gang clenched his teeth but finally sat down hesitantly.

"But..."

"Just wait for a bit longer, brother, I'll be with you. Don't worry, as long as the people are here, she'll release them. They have some small internal situation," Ma Zhongchen desperately tried to tell his outspoken comrade. Instinct told him that if they were to anger her now, something bad would happen.

It was not a small situation.

Three days already passed.

For three days now, Sun Jiao sat in front of the tent. She silently wiped the SK10 laser rifle in her hand. She hadn't used it in a long time, but she always kept it with her. She opened the EP, looking perplexedly at the <Hidden Genetic Code>.

<Revive: Repair critical organs, leave death state. Ability

requirement: triggers when the heart stops beating, and organ damage is below 50%.>

This God-sent ability saved her, probably reviving her when she died.

But at this moment, she did not feel the slightest happiness.

She sighed and closed the EP.

The temperature difference on the wasteland was quite drastic. There was already a hint of chill in the wind. But even with only a light combat suit on her, she did not have any sense of temperature.

How was Jiang Chen doing?

She didn't know.

What she did know was that if he were okay, he would come back immediately.

But now...

She uncontrollably clenched her fist, feeling the sudden moisture in her eyes.

"Dammit."

That fist feebly smashed onto the cold, hard concrete road.

Chapter 112: Overload

There was an excruciating pain, as if his body was being ripped apart. The burning sensation of the tattoo on his right wrist was especially unbearable.

Thank God, he lost his consciousness not long after—

—or else the pain would have actually driven him insane.

He didn't know how long after the incident it was, but the soreness of his entire body returned.

"Urg."

Struggling, he finally opened his drowsy eyes. The first image he saw was a gorgeous face in tears.

"You are finally awake." Ayesha leaped from in front of the bed. Her lips trembled, and the mists in her eyes shook, ready to fall at any time.

"How... long have I been sleeping?" Jiang Chen asked weakly.

"An entire day and night." Her face had concern written all over it.

He felt guilty looking at the heavy eye bags on her face.

[Wait! Where the mutated human go?!]

As if a bucket of cold water had just poured onto his head, Jiang Chen scrambled looking around, but he couldn't find the mutated human's body.

"Ayesha, did you see—"

"That body? I hid it in the basement." Ayesha lowered her head, lightly biting into her lips.

She broke her promise with Jiang Chen.

He had previously told her to never come into the room under any circumstances, but the loud noise from the room had woken her up.

She anxiously approached the room, only to hear Jiang Chen's painful screams.

She didn't waste a second to think before dashing into the kitchen, grabbing a knife, and shoving the bedroom door open.

The next moment, she saw Jiang Chen, who lay in bed unconscious, and a disfigured monster.

Never had she seen a more frightening monster. Its body was

covered with severed flesh. The head and heart were covered in a pitch-black metal....

[Is this thing even human?]

Suppressing the fear in her heart, she approached the monster and placed her hand over its chest.

There were no heartbeats.

She gazed at the unconscious Jiang Chen and then at the monster that had fallen to the ground. She could tell that the two must have had some conflict. Although she didn't understand the absurd scene, she would always stand on her husband's side.

Putting down the knife, Ayesha forced down the agitated contents of her stomach with a deep breath before dragging the body into the mansion's basement.

She then took disinfectant from the bathroom and cleaned the blood trail, careful as though covering up a crime scene

After taking care of everything, she filled a bowl with water and stripped Jiang Chen to wipe down his entire body.

She couldn't fathom how he had become like this in just one afternoon.

At least the still-beating heart somewhat reassured her.

Only after she finished did she bring a chair from the living room to sit beside his bed quietly, waiting for him to wake up.

...

"Did you see everything?" Jiang Chen asked with a bitter smile.

Seeing such a caring face, he could never blame her for coming in.

Ayesha nodded, then buried her head.

"I am willing to give up my life for you if you wish—"

He lifted his hand and covered her mouth. Jiang Chen smiled at her surprised look.

"I am not a devil, you don't need to give up your life.... Just keep the secret for me."

It was okay if she knew; Ayesha would never leak the secret.

With both hands outreached, Ayesha covered the large hand covering her face. She gently nodded.

"Mhmm."

He craned his head to look at the light in the distance; it was almost dawn.

"Go sleep for a little bit. I want be alone to think."

Ayesha nodded with a worried look at Jiang Chen. She then left the room and closed the already broken door.

Lying on the soft bed, Jiang Chen raised his right hand.

All of the energy in the interdimensional bracelet was gone?

He glanced at the bed lamp. After reaching over to unplug it, he stuck his finger into the socket.

The light bulb in the room slightly dimmed, but due to the voltage limit, he only managed to charge the interdimensional bracelet by 2%.

He breathed deeply and concentrated on his right hand in an attempt to open the storage dimension.

Pain radiated from his wrist.

"The energy wasn't consumed, so I guess that means I can't use it

for now?" Jiang Chen looked at his right hand thoughtfully.

He'd been pondering this issue for a while now. If he forcefully grabbed someone to travel with him, then wouldn't it eradicate that person in an instant? But he never had the opportunity to test this "bugged" ability out since in the era of firearms, bullets served the purpose better.

There was an other area of consideration, however. If he spent 40% of the energy traveling, then how much energy would it cost to bring along another person?

The cost of taking someone alive should be different from taking a corpse.

He recalled the last time carrying the hamster, it hadn't cost an excessive amount of energy. But this time with the lead-skin mutated human, it completely drained the interdimensional bracelet. No, the real energy cost definitely far exceeded the 60% limit, which was what caused him to go unconscious.

No need to use it against weak enemies, too costly against strong enemies... A bit useless in battles.

He rubbed his fingers, which were no longer sore, and stared at the interdimensional bracelet on his skin.

He desperately wanted to go back. Sun Jiao must be worried about him.

But the bracelet was most likely "overheated." Seeing as how it could charge, however, it meant it wasn't broken.

Maybe it would return to normal after some time?

Realizing that there was no use worrying, Jiang Chen shook his head and grabbed the EP from the table where it lay after Ayesha had taken it off while wiping down his body.

User Name: Jiang Chen

Body Conditions:

Muscle Strength: 30

Bone Strength: 29

Reflex: 32

Brain Cell Strength: 14

Radiation Level: 0(Safe)

Irregular Status: None

Muscle strength had increased by 5 points, bone strength by 2, reflex increased by 3, and the genetic potential was further developed. On earth, this body condition would easily destroy superheroes like Spiderman and Batman.

If they existed anyway.

Jiang Chen remembered the Sun Jiao had told him before that once injected with the genetic vaccine, the genetic potential would be somewhat unleashed. But to evolve to a stronger form, it could only be accomplished through life and death situations.

That battle truly had been dancing on a knife's edge between life and death.

He recollected that battle with a forced smile.

A power armor, worth over ten thousand crystals, exploded... But what made his heart ache the most was not the crystals but the fact that it was difficult to buy even with crystals. To help him, Zhao Chenwu had sold him all of his remaining units....

Right! Speaking of the battle, that time....

Jiang Chen suddenly remembered that after Sun Jiao had been thrust away by the power warhammer, the <Heart Ceased> symbol had shown up on the team status, spurring him into a state similar to fury.

He opened the special ability tab in EP.

<Hidden genetic code>

???: Muscle strength +35, Reflex+40, Brain cell strength +29.
Special effect: Battle instinct. Can grasp the situation and the enemy's ability in disadvantaged situations, ignore all unnecessary factors, and use previous battle actions to instantly carry them out at the maximum success rate.

Side effect: Emotionless

Time of duration: Until the opponent dies or a trigger is used to cease the effects. After 30 minutes, it will begin to drain life force, and the effect will be reflected in the body afterwards.

Note: Once activated, fury is forcefully deactivated.

It was not fury, but a new ability!

Jiang Chen gulped at the skill description.

Did the three question marks mean that the ability had yet to be named? This meant that nobody had activated this genetic code before?

After pausing to think, he pressed the three question marks, opening up a dialogue box on the screen.

"This... means that it can be named?"

He pondered for a while. He really didn't have any talent in coming up with names.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen slapped his head as if enlightened before typing in <Invictus>.

Hehe. Invictus had the connotation of putting in a cheat code—the ability did seem unfair.

After typing in the name of the ability, Jiang Chen read over the description again.

Based on previous battle actions... that meant that if he had ever used a gun in the past, then he would become Hawkeye. And he had trained in all functions of the power armor before, so he can fluidly control the power armor without any hindrances.

Jiang Chen mentally went over the battle; the combos he made had been perfect. Such mastery was definitely not something he could normally do, especially when he still had to look at the speed monitor when accelerating.

The fuel rod self-destruction program was also an action he had used before.

But why had he never thought about using the interdimensional bracelet to eliminate opponents before?

He thought deeply before coming to a sudden realization.

That was because he had never used "traveling" as a combat action. After experimenting with the hamster, he had never performed it during combat.

"Therefore, the ability's effect achieves skill mastery," Jiang Chen said with a troubled smile after peering at his hand.

Using the interdimensional travel ability to kill should not be a problem, but it would be pushing the limits if used against a monster with a high life force. A mutated human had made him unconscious for an entire day, and he still could not use his bracelet. If he traveled with a Roshan or a Death Claw... Some experiments indicated that his life force was proportional to crystal energy.

He shook his head and put the EP aside, closing his eyes to rest.

Sun Jiao was still alive.

Her <Revive> must have evolved from her <Tenacious> ability. This must be how hidden genetic codes could be further unlocked.

Speaking of this, as long as they used their ability, they had to bear the side effects from it. Fury made him lose consciousness, invictus removed emotion—then what was the side effect of the next hidden genetic code?

For some reason, he felt slightly uneasy.

Genetic vaccines had eliminated the barriers that constrained DNA, allowing humans to unleash abilities previously sealed. But was this really all right? If eliminating barriers was a good thing, then why was there one in the first place when humans first began to evolve?

Only time could tell.

And it was stupid to worry about an ability being too powerful.

Chapter 113: Perhaps I Should Buy an Island

Jiang Chen was lying on a chair beside the swimming pool, enjoying the last rays of the summer afternoon.

Although he was eager to return to the other side to tell Sun Jiao that he was safe, the interdimensional bracelet was on cool down; there was nothing he could do about it, so he rested.

The weather was becoming chillier, and it wouldn't be long before fall arrived.

Thinking about it now, it had to be close to winter time in the apocalypse.

Because of the radiation dust, winter in the apocalypse world came earlier than it did in the modern world. Going by what Sun Jiao said, usually by mid-October, winter would come to Wanghai City—and it would rightly be called a nightmare.

In one month's time, the temperatures would drastically drop to subzero with unnatural snow coating the city in an unhealthy white. Despite this, compared to the first few years, it was getting better. Based on documentations, during the initial years after the nuclear war, the entire world remained frozen in a state of nuclear winter. Only winter, no summer.

During that time, the mutants chose to hibernate or migrate to warmer areas such as abandoned nuclear facilities or geothermal wells.

The only ones unaffected by the harsh temperatures were zombies. Their bodies did not possess enough water to be frozen, but due to the reduced sunlight, their sleep times were also lengthened.

Jiang Chen was deep in thought as he stared at the chilled orange juice placed on the table.

It was necessary to have enough food, clothing, and fuel for the winter, but these were not difficult for him to procure. The coming season would not be too bad for the Fishbone Base.

There was obviously enough food, and winter clothing more effective than down clothes were sold in Sixth Street. Fuel could be substituted by electricity, but overall, the levels of power generated and consumed would decrease in the winter since with the outside temperature already at subzero, the fridge system in the basement could be shut down.

What worried him most was the combat power of the base.

From what he gathered during the battle with the mutated humans, the weakness of the Fishbone Base was finally exposed.

Ample money, but still too weak.

With their power armors, they could steamroll through most survivor groups, but if they wished to expand, their opponents

were not limited to small groups. Wanghai City had so many forces to begin with—what about outside of the city? In the country? And what about the unknown mutants?

If they didn't have the support of heavy weaponry, they would instantly be at a disadvantage upon encountering a military force of mutated humans.

Even more detrimental was the fact that there was no way to replace power armors. This time, four of them had been busted while the remaining were damaged. Despite eliminating the mutated humans, in the end, it was a terrible trade for Fishbone Base.

He did not expect a group of mutated humans to appear out of nowhere. After realizing the Huizhong Mercenaries were in trouble, he had been ready to take advantage of the situation. But upon finishing off the mercenary group, the new opponents were not friendly and immediately opened fire.

From the start, there had been no chance of a peaceful resolution between normal humans and mutated humans. He grasped the glass of juice and chewed on the straw, deliberating as he gazed at Ayesha's body floating in the water.

They lacked heavy weapons.

Fishbone Base was too dependent on Sixth Street who was likely unwilling to sell heavy weaponry to them. At most, they would offer a heavy machine gun or rocket launcher. The only reason

they sold them the high-energy vacuum bombs was because they were ineffective in most situations—useless against zombies and easily intercepted by laser weapons.

These items were limited to begin with since the production facilities were all but destroyed during the war. Weapons like tactical nukes and concentrated laser bombs were all raided from battlefields and half-destroyed military warehouses. Typically, possessing these sort of super weapons reflected the force of a survival camp.

While it was important for Fishbone Base to possess its own firearm production line, they had to also think of ways to develop heavy weaponry. What gave Jiang Chen a headache was that he possessed the technology but not the production capability.

Excluding production equipment, the two limiting factors to Fishbone Base's growth were raw materials and population size.

Mining was impractical in the apocalypse. All of the sources near the surface were emptied. The major mining hubs on small sub-planets and moons had been blown into debris.

And though they did purchase some construction materials from Sixth Street, after this crusade, their own production supplies would have become scarce, so who would be willing to sell to him?

If he wanted to develop the industry, he had to improve waste recycling first.

Because of the rapid advancement in material science, refining matter with page-long names was no mean feat. Jiang Chen knew little about the subject, but he did hear from Zhao Chenwu that 35% of Sixth Street's industrial production was based on "waste recycling" because although organic materials could solve some needs, bullets, bombs, and armors all depended on metal.

As for the matter of population....

Even if they didn't have a complete production line, if they modified some equipment, they could partially create it by hand. This, however, required an excessive amount of labor. The spider tank, for example, required tens of thousands of parts to be assembled. And to use the small population of Fishbone Base to develop military tech.... Zhao Chenwu's military factory alone had more workers.

Could he produce some of the less complex parts in the modern world before moving them to the apocalypse? They had plenty of mining resources, and even if they didn't have the best skills, he could at least acquire some simple production equipment....

Think about it, Jiang Chen wryly smiled and shook his head to give up on the idea. It was too dangerous.

It was not practical in this country. Even if the workers didn't understand the purpose behind the spare parts, a factory without a stated purpose would very soon catch someone's attention. And if anyone happened to find out that he possessed military technology....

The scenario was simply too beautiful to imagine.

Perhaps overseas? Except Jiang Chen was of the mind that all crows in the world were of the same color. If they chose to follow their constitutions and laws, there was a chance that the country would not take action. But if it involved a giant of the military technology field—a massive conglomerate that came into prominence after World War II—they would not pass this opportunity. At this time, the country was willing to keep one eye open, but that was only until the military technology was on the brink of falling into the hands of "their people."

It was such a waste if he could not utilize the rich resources of the modern world.

At that moment, Ayesha burst from the water. Shaking her wet hair, she cast a pleasant smile in Jiang Chen's direction.

Instantly, his eyes light up.

[Urg, it was not because of that....]

Island!

"Fu*k, why didn't I think of it before?" Jiang Chen slapped his head with a humorless smile. The only thing the apocalypse lacked was food, but in this world, it could be obtained almost anywhere. And if work was hard to do domestically, then the situation would

be different on a small, developing island.

If he could simultaneously have a base in the modern world, it would greatly benefit the development in the apocalypse! There was no need to worry about resources and labor in the modern world so long as he could control a small neutral country far from international regulations.

His heart began to pump at the thought.

For a long time now, he had been searching for an option to fall back on.

This was after he had introduced Future 1.0 and was asked to have a chat with the person whom he had saved. Of course, he could say this only in his mind, but once he came out from the Wang family's home, he had the intention of leaving.

But the exact details had to be planned out.

He stood up from the chair and began walking towards the mansion. Ayesha swam to the side of the pool, seductive water droplets hanging on to her dark brown, curly hair. Her tender white arms leaned against the poolside.

The look in her eyes asked, "Don't you want to sleep together?"

Jiang Chen gulped uncontrollably as he took in the charm that she herself didn't know she exuded.

This girl was becoming more and more attractive by the day.

Her white skin was partially due to race, but also partially due to the nutrients in the training chamber. Thanks to it, the grease and the dirt under her skin had been washed away, and the natural pores of the Caucasian race contracted. After days of care, Ayesha's previously stiff skin became as smooth as jade.

It was no exaggeration that if Jiang Chen used the nutrient to open a cosmetic center, he would earn overwhelming profits.

Not only that, but because of the genetic vaccine and the daily workouts, traces of abs began to show. With her perfect legs, the exotic charm became more and more seductive by the day.

But what intoxicated him most was the gaze full of love.

This bikini-clad, attractive figure flourished only for one person.

Jiang Chen had the urge to jump into the water and "play" with her.

But he still had many things to do, and those sorts of actions could be done later at night. Compared to before, he was much better at controlling his desires.

"Ahem, why don't you play by yourself? I have some things to

care of."

Suppressing his desire, Jiang Chen awkwardly smiled and hastily left the pool area.

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Mansion basement.

Jiang Chen observed the mutated human's body. Taking a deep breath, he extended his right hand.

The storage dimension could not keep living creatures; he had tried it before. Ants could be stored—but not cockroaches—only to be instantly killed. It seemed it would be impractical to kill people using the storage dimension.

It did not cost much energy to store corpses in the dimension, and the energy bar had been charged to 10%.

Jiang Chen tensed at the slight pain radiating from his wrist.

"Fu*k, don't you break on me!" When there was still no reaction, Jiang Chen began to sweat profusely.

After a short delay, the mutated human twitched and disappeared into the storage dimension.

He let out a long, relieved sigh and wiped the sweat from his forehead. He glanced at his right wrist.

It had cost 5% energy. He then used the remaining energy to remove crystals from the storage dimension before charging the interdimensional bracelet's energy to max capacity.

It seemed that function had already recovered. Next was interdimensional travel.

Jiang Chen initiated the ability.

But soon, his excitement was killed by the pain in his wrist. The storage function had recovered, but the travel ability did not.

"Too soon?" He looked at his right hand, unable to do anything.

But since the storage function had recovered, the travel ability should follow soon after.

After taking care of the body, Jiang Chen went to the third-floor office and booted up his computer.

He had to prepare his plan to purchase an island.

Opening up Baidu Wiki and Google Earth, his eyes searched the Pacific Rim region.

It didn't have to be too big. Even if he ran out of land later, the apocalypse world had the technology to create artificial land masses. Only, the ocean was more frightening than land, so the technology was not well-known among survivors.

There was also no need for many people as it would be easier to control. If later he needed more, he could simply bring some in.

An unstable political situation, but not too chaotic.

The lower the GDP, the better. The poorer they were, the easier it would be to purchase the land. He would have to invest in it regardless.

Ideally, they wouldn't have a dispute with neighboring countries over annoying things like natural gas or oil. He would eliminate those materials at any time. He didn't need them to make a living, and it would be troublesome to guard against "thieves" when developing in seclusion.

Another important factor was that it had to be away from the "five thugs"! (Likely referring to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.)

Finally, he found a small country located on Pannu Island.

It almost seemed made for him.

A smile on his face, Jiang Chen called Robert's number.

"Hello? My old friend, you finally remember your unlucky friend." Robert's glib tongue was in action on the other side of the phone.

"I've been busy lately. Would you like to cut a deal?" Jiang Chen didn't bother with chit-chat and cut straight to the topic.

Chapter 114: Play a Bad Guy for Me

There was a palpable pause on the other side, followed by a fake laugh.

"Umm, I'm no longer in the business, you know. I'm also on probation, so your words.... That Laurence guy will probably come to have a chat with me in a bit, too."

Hearing Robert's downtrodden voice, Jiang Chen stopped and almost couldn't restrain his laughter.

The guy must not be having the best time right now. By probationary period, he probably meant that the FBA was monitoring his phone after telling him to his face, "I'm watching you right now."

[Showing off despite your current state, and you even said that you would have me covered when I head to Los Santos.]

He smiled but inwardly cursed. Jiang Chen shook his head and got ready to end the call.

"Okay, looks like you can't do this deal then. I'm going to hang up."

"No, no, no, wait—"

The call disconnected, but his cell phone rang shortly after.

He picked up, mocking, "You switched numbers?"

"Hehe, other than the fact that the phone bill is a bit more expensive, this number is pretty convenient. Ahem, what business do you have?"

"I heard you say you're a producer now, but from your tone of voice, it seems you haven't had the best time?" Jiang Chen asked jokingly.

He remembered that the gold deal had been worth around 500 million USD. With a 9% commission, minus the loan and other costs, he should have at least 10 million or more.

Ran out of money already? It was in USD, too.

"Urg, ahem, it takes longer for a movie to return the investment, you know." Robert forced a laugh.

"Did you spend all that money on tail over there in Hollywood?" Jiang Chen chuckled.

[This pervert. There are definitely better ways to spend the money.]

But as that thought crossed his mind, his expression turned sour.

He felt those same words applied to him as well.

"Ahem, let's talk about business." Robert awkwardly laughed from the other side of the call.

Jiang Chen didn't continue to make fun of him as he adopted a more serious tone.

"You've always worked in sensitive areas, so you must be close to mercenaries?"

"Oh? Do you want to hire mercenaries? But in Han—"

"Not in Han," Jiang Chen interrupted. "I need your help hiring a group of people to train bodyguards for me."

[Bodyguards?] Robert paused for a moment.

"In that case, Blackwater International is not bad."

"Not Blackwater." Jiang Chen refused right away. "You said before, they're too close to the FBA." He finally managed to leave a circle of influence; there was no way he was entering another one.

"Hehe, I knew it—you must be thinking of some bad things." Robert ridiculing voice passed through the phone. He continued, "All of the mercenaries in the UA are all somewhat associated with the White House. If you want to find people who only recognize

money, you'll have to go to Africa, the Middle East, or Eastern Europe."

"Then let's do that. Make a trip with me to Eastern Europe," Jiang Chen said.

"Not possible. If I go there, before the plane even fully lands, I'll probably get deported. Speaking of which, are you not in the gold business anymore?" Robert forced a smile.

"Gold is not grown out of the ground. Don't you want to do something big?" Jiang Chen abruptly laughed.

The other side of the phone went silent.

Jiang Chen didn't rush him. He knew Robert was debating with himself, but in the end, he would agree.

Without taking risks, could he still be called a businessman? He was a risk-taker down to his bones.

"Okay, you convinced me. But my instincts tell me that you may be crazy this time. I don't understand. You've been doing pretty well over there and successfully transitioned your business. Why —"

"I have my own troubles, Robert, just like how you have your own," Jiang Chen said meaningfully.

"... All right, I understand. Now that you say it, it does make sense. Once sh*t touches your hand, you can never wash it off, hehe."

Despite stepping out of the business after Iraq, trouble seemed to always follow Robert. He spent most of the money, and though the producer title was pretty nifty, ultimately, it boiled down to money. With money, directors were more than happy to make friends with you.

And without it, who gave a fu*k about you?

He did invest quite heavily, but he had no idea how much profit would come out of it. In the movie industry, he was a completely outsider.

"Then let's talk about your pay first. Twenty million USD—"

"Deal!"

Jiang Chen paused, then began laughing. "Are you not going to ask me what the deal is? If I told you to go bomb a place, would you do it?"

With a sheepish laugh, Robert touched his nose and said, "Ahem, my friend, I trust you won't do things like that to me. If I did receive your money to plant explosives somewhere, you'd be in trouble, too."

Jiang Chen didn't deny it.

"Back to the topic. First, mercenaries. I don't care how, but I need ten people with experience."

The other side lapsed into silence.

"I'll get Nick to go to Kane—I have some connections with General Makanov. Although I won't be there in person, a recommendation letter should be enough. This guy really loves money."

"I'll make a trip myself, so get Nick to wait for me. Would it be acceptable to pay with gold?"

"Of course, they only recognize gold and USD there."

"Secondly, refugees. Europe has many refugees, right? I'll take some of their burdens for them. Help me think because I need around one hundred people."

"Sh*t, what are you trying to—"

"I remember you said yes," Jiang Chen said casually.

After deliberating, Robert let out a sigh of defeat.

"Okay. Let me think, where do you want these people to get off the boat?"

"Africa."

"Okay, I think I get what you mean. Do you want to start your own mercenaries? Or for the people behind you—"

"Ahem, I don't think you should know too much, am I right?" Jiang Chen interrupted with a smile.

[Mercenaries? You are underestimating me.]

"My fault." Robert forcefully chuckled. Suddenly, he remembered the last time in Iraq, Jiang Chen had brought out a drone and a heat-sensor grenade. The organization behind him was likely something he shouldn't know too much about. "Mhmm, capture a trafficking shop in the Mediterranean Sea, and get off at Libya. Then go on land to Nigeria?"

"Is Nigeria chaotic enough?"

This was the question Jiang Chen was most concerned about.

"Somewhat. It's poor enough there. A few hundred thousand USD is enough to buy a plot of land from the chiefs and have them keep their eyes closed to whatever you do there." Robert laughed.

Africa was a haven for mercenaries.

Poverty provided them with a source of troops, and the chaos allowed them to pass freely between borders with weapons. Although he didn't know why Jiang Chen refused to recruit cheap people from there, Robert knew by now not to ask anymore.

"Great, then transporting them will be up to you. I'll take care of the other things."

"Is that all?"

"No, one more point." Jiang Chen smiled mischievously. "I heard you're a producer in Hollywood?"

"Ugh? Yes, I remember that you know." Robert was uncertain of the meaning behind his words.

"Play the bad guy for me. Your paycheck will be twenty million, in gold."

Jiang Chen laughed malevolently.

Chapter 115: A Blockbuster

Pannu Islands, located in South Pacific Ocean, was near the equator. The sunshine made this place a great destination for a vacation.

The tourist attractions were plentiful in the area, natural island, volcano lake, rain forest. But because of the lack of infrastructure, it didn't manage to gain much traction. On the entire main island, the most expensive thing was probably the international airport, which they borrowed the money to build.

At this time, inside the not-so-busy airport terminal, two strange looking foreigners walked side by side.

"Roger, do you think I will be famous? To be honest, I smoked weed when I was 13. I was in juvenile by 15-"

"Hehe, and then you got your a*s pounded by the black uncle inside? Who cares? The guy sitting in the Rainbow Mansion did far dumber things. Also, if you dare to use your Irish accent and call me Roger, I'll twist your head off." Robert stopped, and turned around to look at the Caucasian teen fiercely.

"Sorry, buddy, you know I am just nervous." Johnny waved his hand, unbothered by his words, and continued, "I asked the psychiatrist before, he said he had a phobic for being too famous."

"Shut up, you bastard," Robert cursed out.

Johnny kept his mouth shut after he heard those words, he knew that Robert was not someone to mess with. In Los Santos, even the Gang Leader would give him some ground. Although he seemed to have exited out of the business, it was not someone a little pawn like him would dare to mess with.

Whenever someone mentioned to him Irish, three words would surface in Robert's head: Weed, Alcoholic, Poor.

But right now he must patiently entertain this dumb*ss because it has to do with 20 million USD.

As to why he appeared here, it all started from the conversation a couple of days ago with Jiang Chen.

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"Play a bad guy for me, and 20 million will be your paycheck. I'll pay in gold."

Jiang Chen stopped momentarily before he continued, "On an island country in the Pacific."

Robert paused, then his expression suddenly changed.

"Sh*t, are you going to-"

"You are right. If you guessed it, then keep it to yourself. All in all, write a script for me and pick a good "protagonist" for me. I am going to film a blockbuster." Then an evil laugh was transmitted through the phone.

He knew the laugh too well. Someone was going have a bad time.

"...You are crazy. Although I am a producer, I am more of an investor." Robert forced a troubled smile, he rubbed his temple and continued briefly after, "Okay, God. Let me think. Where are you planning to film it? How much are you going to invest?"

"One hundred million USD, one year of GDP for Pannu island. The plot will be, a Los Angeles billionaire came to Pannu Island with the intentions of investing in the local industry. He began bribing local officials and taking a sh*t on all the natives there. Okay, so that's the first movie's plot. Oh, I recommend the billionaire be acted out by a poor bastard bad to the bone. I need him to display his expressions after he suddenly gets wealthy."

"Haha-, don't worry, there are too many of you in Los Santos."

"I'll wire the one hundred million to your account."

Robert paused when he heard Jiang Chen's words and asked with a perplexed expression, "You are going to wire it to me? Are you not scared that I am going to run away?"

"I trust that you won't. Honor code right? Especially since I can

get you out from IS, are you still-"

"I understand, that's enough." Robert faked a laugh as he touched his nose. "We are old friends. Some things don't need to be said."

"That's right. You are a smart person. The money that's supposed to belong to you will belong to you. Hehe, if this deal is successful, you'll have a lot more to gain from it. Aren't you annoyed with the FBA? I can give you a backup option."

Robert heard the words, and his throat twitched.

He suddenly remembered a piece of "entertainment" news on the international section of the newspaper a while ago.

December 30, 2014, Gambia Presidential office was attacked by a militant group of approximately ten people. The militants attempted to stage a coup. This bizarre event was the direct action of the Texas real estate businessman and a Minnesota veteran. They recruited people, bought weapons, and then transported the weapons through an illegal channel to Gambia.

Of course, without a doubt, they failed. Based on their original plan, the action would not receive too much resistance. They thought the soldiers in the presidential office would not pose too much resistance in a dangerous situation like that. Perhaps they would even receive the support of some soldiers who decided to join forces with them.

The result was that three of them were shot died right on the spot. There was no way to defeat them.

In the unsuccessful coup, the Texas real estate developer businessman was the primary sponsor, and because they broke the <Neutrality Law>, the American prosecutor sued him. He only sponsored two hundred twenty thousand USD as he only wanted to be a president once.

Now, Robert felt like he was doing the same thing.

Except this lunatic was even more insane, he was willing to put in one hundred million USD!

One hundred million USD to buy an entire country?

Not only that, as well as the cost of mercenaries.

"Dammit, let me ask you, are you serious?" Robert's fingers were trembling. He couldn't even hold onto his phone.

It was not because he was afraid, but rather he was excited.

He was an adventurer at heart. If he were to really be successful, then the "small" firearm merchant could make history.

Of course, he didn't really care about the reputation. The key was still the profit involved. He had a feeling that if he could establish a

connection with "the force" behind Jiang Chen, his return would far exceed his previous total earning!

"That's right. I think you should ask for a break from your friend Laurence. I don't want the FBA to be involved again." The tone sounded light.

"Of course, I'll think about it. Hehe, it is getting me excited." His fingered constantly rubbed the phone as there was clear excitement in his eyes.

"I don't care if you are excited or not, I want results. Let me be clear. This "movie" can only be shot once, you have to consider it carefully," Jiang Chen said slowly.

"Trust me, as a renowned producer in Hollywood, I, Robert, will make you extremely satisfied with my script."

"Mhmm, I'll have to take your word for it then," Jiang Chen said casually and then hung up the phone.

-

There were already people waiting at the airport exit.

Beside a limited edition black Mercedes Benz was a middle-aged white man with a beer belly, constantly checking his watch.

He made the loose suit look rather tight. Beside him, an Asian stood there, appearing to be his bodyguard.

On another note, in this small country with only a population of twenty thousand, the entire military was only 100 people. They occasionally had to play the role of police as well.

Suddenly, the middle-aged man's eyes lit up as he saw Robert and Johnny walk out.

"Oh, Mr. Robert, you are finally here! Haha, is this Johnny?" The white man opened his arms and greeted Robert with an amiable smile. He also looked excitedly at the Irish next to Robert.

"Sh*t, is he gay?" Johnny asked Robert with his voice lowered.

"Shut up, dumb*ss. The shooting already started," Robert moved his head and cursed, but immediately changed into a smiling expression and walked up to the man.

"That's right. This is Johnny, a billionaire from Los Angeles." Just like old friends that haven't seen each other for years, they hugged each other and backed away. Robert turned around to look at Johnny, "This is Pannu Island's president - Edward. British descendant, basically from your hometown. Also, acts as the finance minister, and..."

From your hometown was said full of malicious intent.

"As well as generally, my friend." Edward courteously shook Johnny's hand and shook it furiously. His face did not have any disdain for Irish people like usual Britains do.

The reason why he would display this expression was purely due to what Robert had said. This Johnny guy was an Irish billionaire from Los Angeles. No one had invested in Pannu island for a long time, there was finally a billionaire, so this fake Emperor did everything to please him.

As to being Irish? Who cared? He only cares about the bills printed with Franklins.

After some small talk, the president invited them to get on his luxury vehicle, and personally drove them to the mansion - Robert purchased it two days ago under Johnny's name. It was worth half a million USD.

"Dammit. President, the finance minister, general... what is he not?" Seated on the comfortable sofa, Johnny counted his fingers.

"And supreme court judge, education minister? He would not take any positions without benefits. Don't worry about it, do a good job on what I told you to do." Robert took a bottle of Whisky from the fridge, put it on the table, and pour himself a cup.

"Nice, these is booze." Johnny excited grabbed it and poured himself a cup as well.

Robert glanced at the alcoholic that gulped down the entire cup as he took a sip. Then he said, "There is a banquet tomorrow night, the local influentials will all be attending. Come with me, and I'll teach you what to do. The day after is an investing tour. You'll spend two million USD investing in a cargo port on the main island. Learn from me, see how I am stuffing the money, and establish a relationship with the officials,"

Robert continued.

"Also, not long after that there will a Han merchant contacting you. He is an old friend of mine. He is currently in the food processing business, help him a little, I don't think I need to teach you more."

"Gulp-." Okay, Roger. Speaking of filming, where is the cameraman? Buddy, we are shooting a movie right?" Johnny burped with the cup in his hand. In a few minutes, who knows how many shots he had taken already.

"Yes, we are filming a movie. This is the newest filming technique. You'll be part of history. Don't forget to build a statue for yourself in the city center, and the film team will do a special shot of it." Robert resisted the urge to laugh as he took another sip of the whiskey.

"Mhmm, in this case, I only need to spend money?" Johnny chuckled as he poured himself another cup, "This is a great job, what's the name of our movie again?"

"<A Billionaire in the Slum>. Don't forget the piece that will make you famous. It's not only about spending money, but you also have to act as cocky, arrogant, and unbearable as possible. Such as cheating on the neighbor's wife, seducing the woman in town, just do everything you wanted to do Los Angeles... Be yourself. Do a good job. If the reception is good, then there will be sequels." Robert leaned against the sofa as he mockingly looked into drunken eyes.

"Burp-, sequels? What's the name?"

Just as he finish the sentence, he dropped the cup and fell asleep.

"What's the name? <A kingdom's destruction>, idiot," Robert continued to mocked and put down the Whisky in his hands.

Alcohol, it's better to just have a taste.

Chapter 116: Messaging Function Online

(Note: Pannu Islands is a fictitious location)

After ending the conversation with Robert, Jiang Chen returned to the pool. Just as a smirk spread across his face and he was ready to jump into the pool and have an intimate moment with Ayesha, his phone rang again.

It was Xia Shiyu.

It was not the right time.

He cursed in his mind, as he unhappily picked up the phone. But when he heard the news from the other side, his unhappiness faded.

First was from Future 1.0.

Because they were approaching 250 million downloads shortly after the software was available. In a few days Jiang Chen was gone and based on the marketing department's plan, Future 1.0 welcomed its first update. Now, the earnings were already evident as a result of the update.

Rather than an update, it was releasing a previously locked function.

The update opened up the community system; everyone would acquire a random account after the patch.

Other than cleaning the exquisite design, the chat interface had nothing special. To put it simply, everyone had an account that they could freely add friends, set up chat groups, and post statuses on.

The functions were not unique as all the other chat program had it, but the one thing that made it stand out among its competitors were - smart friend search!

Based on the user's description, Little White can accurately search for the chat partner based on the description. Of course, it was up to the user to decide on what information to make available or not.

The user's personality was based on the data collected during daily interactions and analyzed based on a special software. The results were 97% accurate and would be hidden from the user and stored on the server's side. The personality only recorded positive traits and did not include negative traits, since no one would want to expose their weakness. The user could choose to publish these traits, or reevaluate after a period, but could not change the traits.

For example, if a man wanted a "big boobed, gorgeous, energetic, being able to cook, nice to parent girl", Little White would find it since the user base was already at 250 million. Except that it would be up to the other side to add you or not. Even if you get rejected, Little White would suggest you lower the standards, and improve upon oneself.

If the random selection were activated, Little White would use smart setting to match friends with the highest compatibility.

Apart from that, Future 1.0 also introduced VIP.

Although it was similar to QQ's member policy, there was a slight innovation. Other than putting the red VIP symbol beside the user ID, it also introduced contribution system correlated with levels.

There was a funny joke on Weibo before: The designer was driven insane, suddenly, he jumped up and yelled, "I want to design a game with only two functions; pay and ranking." So, in the end, the game was actually introduced - which was Bilibili's new anime sponsorship plan.

Mhmm, the innovation was replicated by Future Technology.

1 RMB equaled to 10 contributions, 100 contributions would level up to VIP1. To upgrade to VIP2, it would require 1000 contribution which was equivalent to 100 RMB. Based on this scale, VIP5 would need 100 thousand RMB. To maintain the current status, 10 RMB would be enough. Not paying would hide the VIP symbol but it would not level down.

Other than that, there were also 10 Diamond VIPs that were granted automatically to the top 10 contributors.

Would people actually pay?

Yes!

Two days after the introduction of the community feature, there were two hundred VIP5 users born. The top of the contribution list was a coal tycoon with a contribution of one hundred million. That meant he paid one million!

Why would people be so willing to pay?

Imagine this. If a beauty searched you, the first thing she saw was a VIP6 or diamond symbol, what kind of reaction would it be? Or some would actually put a VIP limit on the search, prohibit anyone below VIP3 from adding them.

Showing off and bragging were common flaws of all humans, especially rich people that have too much money. They only needed to be recognized. The massive user base of Little White and the existence of the contribution system gave them the perfect platform to show off.

Based on the backend stats, the guy at the top of the list almost had his friend request feature blow up.

Although it was not Jiang Chen's intention, the pure Little White became another great app for one night stands after Momo and Wechat.

Other than that, VIP user also had other exclusive privileges. For

example the invitation for Beta testing of the mobile game <New Era>, it would select ten thousand users from each of the different levels. Therefore, the one hundred million users would split ten thousand codes. The millions of VIP1 would also split ten thousand codes, the VIP5 users, would each get one as there are only a few hundred of them. Do you want the invitation code? Then pay more money.

This era-defining mobile game had a lot of expectation and hype. Based on the marketing department's research, on Taobao, an invitation code was propped up to 1000 RMB, which almost broke the record for highest price paid for an invitation code.

Of course, this design certainly caused some people to be unhappy. Especially those people with ill intentions who hired internet armies to control the direction of criticisms. The only point was that it was unfair for so many normal users to split only ten thousand codes. That's un fair! We are going to protest.

But those brain-dead comments did not have any negative impact on Future 1.0, but rather it triggered angry responses from Little White's fan. Once it turned into a debate, it became a hot topic which was a form of free advertisement for Future 1.0.

When the people with ill intentions realized that the internet armies they hired did not create the perception they wished, it was too late to regret.

Part of the success was because of Xia Shiyu's effort. When she discovered the signs, she immediately responded and hired her own internet army to steer the direction of the conversation. She

perfectly used the tricks of the opponents to turn this into a successful marketing campaign.

All in all, Future 1.0's financial report was very impressive. Within ten days of the community function, the company's net earning was one hundred million RMB! The number would only increase with the continued operation of Future 1.0, as well as higher user dependence.

Xia Shiyu even confidently stated that within two years, she could break the yearly revenue record set by the member system of Penguin group!

The other area was the mobile game, after a period of marketing, the invitation code was already distributed to the market through Little White. Part of the invitation codes has been circulated through the VIP system. Even if it has been circulated to people who didn't want to play, because it was not tied to the account, third parties could purchase the code and sell it for margin.

As to the code being propped to 1000 RMB, even if they were not fans of New Era, they would be interested in the invitation code. If they didn't play the game, they could always sell it for money. There was nothing to lose.

So naturally, it turned into another form of advertisement. Since the Little White user base already reached 250 million, those people would pay attention to the game because of the expensive invitation code even if they didn't play the game.

Within two months, Future Technology was already profitable. It made the venture capitals that were waiting for the opportunity frustrated that they missed the hen that laid golden eggs. They previously planned to wait for Future Technology to have cash flow problems before they opened their greedy mouths and took the company with endless amounts of potential.

But who would have thought that Future Technology didn't lack money in the first place? Even Penguin had to beg venture capitals.

When he heard one hundred million in profits, Jiang Chen straight up told Xia Shiyu that he would use one million as a bonus. Unlike other tech companies, Future Technology's cost was insanely low. Other than the cost of labor and server maintenance, after-tax, the rest would be profit.

As to research and development, what was that? Only a couple of cans of food.

"Seeing that you are working so diligently, should I give you a raise?" Jiang Chen laughed.

His mood was indeed delighted. Although the one hundred million was nothing to his net assets, it was a good start. It was the first stream of "clean" money he earned.

"No need. My 1% dividend is already enough." From her voice, that girl was also in a good mood. It was a feat being able to accomplish this with a new team.

After the one hundred million equity infusion, she proactively brought up decreasing her share percentage. So after the change, her share in the company changed to 1%. Although Jiang Chen was surprised, he didn't stop her.

Even if it was just 1% share, the one hundred million profit this year was a lot. Because she was not the legal representative, there was a 20% income tax. But even after that, it would still be 800 thousand RMB. Two more months until year end, with this year's profit, any dividend would exceed her current salary.

Bonus and salary were meaningless to her now.

Because it was work time, Xia Shiyu ended the call after reporting to Jiang Chen.

It wasn't until now that Jiang Chen noticed that there were a bunch of missed calls. Starting from yesterday, there was a call every half an hour. After going to the Apocalypse, the phone was in his storage dimension. He only took out the phone after calling Robert, so all the missed phone call messages came in.

"This girl..." A smile curled up on Jiang Chen's mouth.

Although she always kept a cold and serious face, she could be surprisingly cute at times.

Ayesha leaned beside the pool. Her mouth pouted slightly. The graceful and serene legs were moving through the water

disinterestedly.

She was not the type to get jealous, but for the phone call that clearly interrupted the intimate moment with her and her husband, it did make her a little unsatisfied.

Jiang Chen threw the phone into the storage dimension before noticing the expression on Ayesha's face. He smiled.

He didn't even take off his clothes before he dived into the water.

In Ayesha's light outcry, Jiang Chen hugged the gentle and loyal girl with a smirk. Compared to before, they were no longer awkward. From her daily actions, he clearly sensed her love.

To be fair, he did not have feelings for her in the beginning. He just somewhat accepted her.

But because of her proactiveness, Ayesha's love finally slipped into his heart. Her gentleness, her understanding, and her sacrifice were almost extinct in the modern world. Just by looking into her eyes, he would be melted by the love. He was uncontrollably drawn to her.

It was time for him to be proactive.

"Can you teach me how to swim?" Jiang Chen said with a smirk, as he blew into her ear.

Ayesha lowered her head shyly, and then she put her hands on his wet shirt.

"Mhmm."

Chapter 117: Purchasing a Food Processing Plant

The next morning, Jiang Chen woke up from his sweet dream. He looked at the adorable girl beside him, sleeping as calmly as a cat, and his mouth curled up.

Mouth slightly closed, graceful eyebrows, eyelashes gently trembling, and the somewhat messy hair...

The porcelain doll-like white skin was cast with slight redness on her cheeks, and from her rhythmic breathing, Jiang Chen could hear a hint of tiredness and joy.

It was a bit too crazy last night.

Jiang Chen thought about last night as his face turned red. He didn't know if it was his illusion, but he felt that every time Ayesha was treated "roughly" by him, she would be excited, especially with her hands pulled behind her back, from the back...

He awkwardly touched his nose, and then gently tucked Ayesha in before quietly sneaking down from the bed.

He hadn't cooked breakfast in a long time.

Jiang Chen, satisfied, looked at the buttered toast and oatmeal with milk on the table with a great sense of accomplishment.

"I definitely have the potential to be a great man," he narcissistically murmured. He then relaxingly sat beside the table to enjoy the breakfast. He still had a lot of important things to do, so he had to wake up earlier than usual.

He cleaned everything up and left a sticker on the table before he left the door humming.

He drove straight to the rural area with his Maybach.

Jiang Chen still needed to do some preparation work for his island purchase plan. The sooner, the better. Robert probably started the plan already on his side. To be fair, he was even scared by his own plan. If he made a mistake by accident, he would enter the blacklist of the international police.

But then he just needed it to succeed, right?

-

Ayesha opened her weary eyes and slowly sat up on the bed. She smoothed her slightly messy hair and stared blankly at the empty pillow, her mind just zoned out for a moment.

She didn't know why she fell in love with Jiang Chen, but the feeling was that intense. Whenever she saw him, her heart beat would increase. Whenever he hugged her, her entire body would feel hot.

She blankly smiled as she remembered last night.

Suddenly she woke up from her drowsy state.

"Oh no, I forgot to cook breakfast."

In her perspective, to be a qualified wife, she should put the prepared breakfast on the table before the husband headed out for work. Although it was not written in the religion, it was the family tradition from her mother's side.

That's how she had measured herself. She knew that her husband was a great man, including the woman that came back with him on the car, he probably has a lot of "wives". Even if she wouldn't get jealous, she still craved more attention.

This included a controlled diet (She did not know the genetic vaccine improved her digestive ability, she didn't need to control her diet to avoid that extra fat on her stomach), proper exercise, to make herself look fit and charming. The nutrient was also marvelous, as it seemed to improve her skin condition. The only draw back was the awkward pee tube.

She also worked diligently on housework.

But she was too tired last night, even when she woke up this morning, her leg still felt sore, that's why she slept in.

She quickly got out of the bed, Ayesha put a long white dress shirt on her gorgeous figure and then ran downstairs with her legs exposed.

However, she was disappointed. Jiang Chen already left.

Frustrated by her own "mistake", after washing up, Ayesha grumpily came to the kitchen to make some food for herself.

When she saw the breakfast already on the table, she paused.

Her heart felt warm.

There was a note on the table, the writing was really neat, and she could understand it with her Han level now.

<I won't come home to eat, you don't have to wait for me. Take care of yourself. - Jiang Chen.>

She put the notes in front of her chest as a flush of warmth appeared on her face.

She suddenly remembered why. Because of this gentleness, that was what made her uncontrollably fell in love with him.

Although he always gave off a naughty feeling, he always took great care of her. He didn't discriminate her because of her refugee status nor treat her brutally...

Her hands sub-consciously crossed her chest as her finger gently pressed the button on her shirt.

"Dad, Mom, I am living a happy life in this foreign country. Don't worry about me."

She grasped onto the note tightly as she prayed.

-

Xinlong Food Processing Plant.

The gray concrete wall looked relatively clean, the surrounding environment was not too bad either. Although it was small, it had everything in there. Just from the outside, Jiang Chen was quite pleased with the plant.

He got off the car and looked around before he quickly found the person he was looking for.

A middle-aged man squatting in front of the door, smoking, quickly stepped on the cigarette after he saw Jiang Chen. Forcing a smile, he came to greet him.

But that smile was no better looking than him crying.

The information said he was 31 years, but the 180 cm man has a

hunched back like a 50-year-old elder, the whiteness on the side of his hair and the engraved face was not because of the passage of time, but rather the misfortunes in life.

"Jiang Chen, you should already have seen my information." Jiang Chen didn't judge this man too much, as he extended his hand with a smile.

"Zheng Hongjie, owner of the Xinlong Food Processing Plant." Zhen Hongjie shook Jiang Chen hand, and forced another smile. He then gave Jiang Chen a welcoming gesture. "Mr. Jiang follow me to take a look at the plant."

"Mhmm." Jiang Chen nodded.

Both of them entered the plant side by side. Jiang Chen noticed the dust on the production line. This place hasn't produced in a while.

"Two canned food processing lines, an instant noodle line, and a cookie line. Our work was mostly in processing before, but no one wants to work with us now."

Zheng Hongjie's smile was bitter. He then led Jiang Chen to back of the plant.

"This is the warehouse, including the four empty acreages of land. We previously had the plan to expand the plant, but now it looks like it is not necessary. I'll sell you the production equipment

at 70%, we'll make it 300 thousand. The land and plant itself are a bit more expensive, 2.4 million, can't go lower than that."

After finishing, Zheng Hongjie stopped talking and looked at Jiang Chen's reaction.

He estimated in his mind and nodded rather pleased.

The price was fair, even a bit lower than the market price. He already asked the intermediary before, the plant's cost was around 3 million. This guy must have met some trouble with money, or else he wouldn't need to sell the plant at a lower price this hastily.

Although he already decided to purchase it, Jiang Chen's eyes moved slightly. He didn't reply, but rather he gave Zheng Hongjie a cigarette with a smile and dragged him aside.

"Mr. Zheng, I am quite pleased with the price. But I am curious, based on the construction of the plant, you are not the type to have improper planning. What made you want to sell your asset?"

Zheng Hongjie didn't reject the cigarette as he skillfully lit it up.

He blew a smoke ring. The just 31-year-old man had wrinkles squished together on his face, and he bitterly smiled again.

"Stock market."

Although it was only two words, Jiang Chen instantly knew his sadness.

Chapter 118: The Bankrupt Zheng Hongjie

There is a famous quote in <Fortress Besieged>, marriage is like a siege, people want to go outside, people want to come inside. The same word would apply to the stock market without it being the slightest bit unfit.

Five years ago, Zheng Hongjie was only an ordinary taxi driver. Because of chatting with a passenger once, he heard about the food processing industry.

The slight drunk boosted to him how processing food made money, and at that time he was tempted. Being only twenty, he didn't want to be a taxi driver for his entire life. From that point on, he started to learn about the unfamiliar industry.

With the family saving as well as borrowings from relatives, he successfully purchased a poorly operated small processing plant.

Although he didn't go to university before, because of his hard work and desire to learn, he used his learned-on-the-spot operation knowledge to expand the small facility to a large plant.

Contracts flew to him like snowflakes. The canned food and instant noodles he produced were not only high in quality, but the price was also superior compared to his competitors. The plant was getting more and more profitable, buying land, purchasing production lines, hiring more employees... Even the famous Master Kung sent them a contract for food processing.

Within five years, Boss Zheng's name spread throughout his hometown. His former friends began calling him Boss Zheng, Brother Zheng.

From nothing to starting his plant in Wanghai city. Being able to buy a car, buy a house, and returning to his hometown in glory. From a taxi driver to a boss, his experience in the five years could be written into a book.

But everything changed at the end of last year.

The stock market sunk to the bottom, rumors of the index striking 6124 finally faded. The stock market was averaging around 3000 at the time. One of his business friends told him once when they were drinking that stock markets were a good place to make money, and if he had money, he should give it a try.

Although he was a bit drunk, Zheng Hongjie's head was still sober. His consciousness told him that this zero sum game was not right. How could a market without producing any goods create value?

Zheng Hongjie didn't listen to his friend, but rather he told his friend not to be so drawn into tricky things. But his friend only laughed and didn't bother with him.

Four months later, his friend bought two apartments in the city. His previous car was upgraded to a BMW. When they were drinking again, the friend gloated on the fact that he used one million to make a stunning return of five million.

Seeing his friend was now wealthy, Zheng Hongjie felt regret. If he listened to his friend's words, it wouldn't just be two apartments, he would probably be living in a mansion by now. He worked hard for four months, and in the end didn't even make as much as his friend made in a few days.

After a few more rounds, perhaps due to envy, Zheng Hongjie casually asked, "Is it too late to get in now?"

When he heard those words, his friend was immediately drawn to the conversation. He constantly boasted at how "the economic condition is superb," "it is only going to go up," "there is no backing down this time!"

After a passion-filled conversation, Zheng Hongjie was tempted. With only the food processing plant, it would take ten years before he could become a millionaire, but he could with only a few days in the stock market.

When he returned home, he hesitantly opened an account. Under the guidance of his friend, he tested the water by putting in twenty thousand. He didn't pay too much attention to the account as he was busy with his business until one month later when he remembered that he bought stock.

He only opened the account out of curiosity and wanted to see how much money that twenty thousand turned into. If it were a small amount, even if he lost it all, it would be okay.

It would have been better if he didn't look, he immediately jumped up when he saw the number. The twenty thousand turned into fifty thousand.

He felt the world dazzling around him. It was not excitement, but regret.

That's right, it was regret.

If he put in two million, it would've become five million! If he borrowed some money to buy ten million, he would be a millionaire already...

Human's greed was infinite, the piercing 5000 red number, he remembered Renren Newspaper; "The bull market is only halfway to the top." He immediately put all two million from his account into the stock market. Out of the two million, there was a one million loan used for the plant's expansion.

"Renren Newspaper would not trick its citizens right?" "xxx can't be lying?" "If the stock market crashed then xxx would be the first one to react!"

Mhmm. It's hard to believe, but they did the trick, what can you do?

In the start, he did feel excited as a 2% increase was forty thousand. By just looking at that red line, he felt his entire body shake with excitement. He was starting to day dream about the life

of a millionaire and forgot the caution he had before.

With just half a month, he experienced the feeling of dropping down from heaven to hell.

The index headed straight down, thousands of stocks with 10% decreases became the norm, but the media kept pushing it up.

"The right opportunity to get into the bull market."

"Short term adjustments for higher adjustment."

"Stock hits rock bottom, now is the time to buy."

"The index can't drop anymore The central government is discussing interest rate drop."

"80% of organizations think the stock market is at the bottom."

"Pension plan is in discussion to enter the market."

He continued to buy in only to continue to lose. The friend that promised him that it wouldn't drop below 4000 points was nowhere to be seen. It was rumored that he borrowed money he shouldn't have, left his wife and children and escaped to the south.

Zheng Hongjie wanted to die, but he couldn't. He has a wife that

loved him dearly, and a daughter that idolized him.

The plant expansion was a no go.

Because he used the loan for other purposes, to avoid legal consequences, as well as being forced by the bank to sell assets to repay debt, Zheng Hongjie decided to borrow elsewhere to fill the hole. He borrowed money from his business friends and repaid the bank loan. Then he put the rest of the money into the plant, hoping he could slowly repay the debt.

However, another unfortunate event occurred.

Within less than a month, the high rising pork price increased the price of other foods which directly increased the cost of producing canned foods and slammed the food processing industry. But to repay this debt, he practically accepted all orders and used the guarantee fee to maintain production and repay debt.

With the price from the previous month, based on the high rising cost of production, for every canned food he produced, he lost 1 RMB. But he had to keep producing, or else he would have to pay for breach of contract.

If it was before, he could have easily handled this crisis with the cash on hand, but now...

After debating, he chose to breach the contract and lost every single cent. He lost all opportunities to start up again. The bank

would not loan him money, and he could no longer pay for the workers, so he had to let go of all employees.

The five years was like a dream.

Because of a legal Ponzi Scheme, he went from high up in the clouds to hell.

"The stock market was like <Inception>, people on the outside were afraid, people on the inside couldn't escape."

He left a sentence worth thinking about. Then he blew the last smoke ring before stepping on the cigarette butt.

If he knew what would happen today, he wouldn't have done it from the beginning. To be honest, Jiang Chen also followed the stock market before, but before this July, he had no money in his pocket. He was quite lucky that he was always an "outsider."

Silently listening till he finished, Jiang Chen let out a sigh.

"Your experience could be written into a book. Do you have any plans?"

"Probably driving. Selling the factory should be enough to pay off the debt, and the missing salaries. Although I am not a boss anymore, I still have to maintain my morale as a person." He laughed self-mockingly as he shook his head.

Morale is a bright spot, Jiang Chen secretly nodded his head as he heard Hongjie's words. He didn't know how to operate a plant, rather than going to a headhunter to find a manager, it would be better to hire this expert right away.

"I am talking about your future plans, not your plan for tomorrow." Jiang Chen smiled, he looked at the wry face, unfitting for his age, as he spoke lightly.

Zheng Hongjie paused for a moment.

"Me? Probably driving-"

"A waste of talent. I personally look highly of people with ability," Jiang Chen waved his hand and interrupted him, and he continued with a smile, "What about this? Do you have any interest in working in my factory? Xinlong Food Processing Plant is still called Xinlong. You are still the head."

Finishing his words, Jiang Chen extended his right hand and looked at him with a bright smile.

Shocked, the aged faced suddenly regained some liveliness. From the initial shock to the final excitement, Zheng Hongjie extended his hand out, trembling, and held onto Jiang Chen's hand.

He never imagined that the new owner of the factory would risk the bad luck and hire a failure. Regardless, the plant went down

because of him.

"The closure of the factory was not because of your operational mistake. I think Xinlong would only be able to generate maximum value in your hands. I trust that you won't easily just let go of so many years of hard work, what do you think?"

"I do!"

An answer without hesitation.

He put Jiang Chen's hand down as Zheng Hongjie picked up the cigarette bud he threw on the ground.

"What are you doing?" Jiang Chen was bewildered.

"Hehe, sanitation is critical in a food processing plant. When I was the head, without exaggerating, there was not a single bud in the entire plant!" As if the spring breeze just blew by, all of the sudden, the rigid face returned to its former day liveliness.

Jiang Chen shrugged, extinguished the bud, and followed him to the trashcan to throw it in the bin.

"Now that I have purchased the company, I will inject one million into it. I demand you to restart production within half a month. I just want to ask one thing, are you confident!"

"Yes!"

Seeing Zheng Hongjie shout out at the top of his lungs, Jiang Chen laughed and patted him on the shoulder.

"That's the attitude! I trust you. Now go with me to the bureau to finish the process."

"Hehe, boss, could I invite you to lunch after the process? I don't have a lot of money, so I can't treat you at a restaurant." The thirty something man forced a laugh.

Regardless, he wanted to invite the person that gave him a second chance for a meal to express his sincere gratitude. It was the tradition of his hometown, and his insistence throughout his life.

Slightly unexpected it, Jiang Chen immediately laughed.

"No problem!"

He noticed out of a sudden that the abjected man's chest finally rose up.

As if he received a new life.

Chapter 119: It's you again?

The process was completed quickly, and Jiang Chen acquired the rights to the factory. When the 2.7 million was transferred to Zheng Hongjie's bank account, and he received the confirmation message on his phone, the man finally lets out a sigh of relief.

He still acted as the plant manager with a base salary of 8000, and based on sales there would be bonuses. Just like before, he would have to take care of everything from marketing to production. Although a bit overwhelming, Jiang Chen gave him a lucrative bonus plan. It would depend on his sales to see how much he would get in the end.

"I won't care too much on how the plant is operated, but you have to do a few things for me." Although he said it casually, Zheng Hongjie still sensed the inflexibility in his tone.

"Please go ahead." Zheng Hongjie nodded with an earnest expression.

"First, if you want to do it, then go big. Processing for other people can be put aside. We'll have to develop our own brand."

"Our own brand?" Zheng Jiehong forced a smile, and continued, "To be honest, I tried to start my own brand before, but the cost is too high. Advertisement, sponsorship, distribution channel, it was incomparable to the profit margin of processing for other people, there's also more risk."

Jiang Chen shook his head laughing.

"Processing for other people is enough if we want to remain small, but I don't plan on doing that. I'll continue to invest in the early stages, including research and development, upgrading to the larger production lines, and expanding the plant. You don't have to worry about the sales channel, I'll mention it next. As to distribution and advertisement, I'll take care of it."

[Funny, there is no channel better than the Internet right? Promotion could be done on Future 1.0, such as free moon cake during the mid-autumn festival. Or when he makes Liu Yao famous, getting her to promote the brand would be simple.]

Seeing the boss so certain, although Zheng Jiehong was still unsure, he didn't continue asking.

"Second, this is the most important point. We'll transition to international trade. I need you to register for import and export requirement; the destination is currently Pannu Island. We'll import the fruit to produce fruit can and sell domestically, then export other canned food."

When he heard Jiang Chen's words, Zheng Hongjie slightly raised his eyebrows. He asked wondering.

"I considered export before, but it was not as easy it as it seems. First being that we don't have a strong brand, second being the cost. We don't have any advantages compared to corporations in Australia, or the Philippine. And the most critical factor is

transport. I know a little about Pannu Island. It's a small island country in the Pacific, and it doesn't even have a deep water port to dock larger ships."

"You don't have to worry about that. It won't be long until an investor builds a cargo port there. You only need to expand production and sell to them, and produce the cheap food imported from there into food cans." Jiang Chen smiled mysteriously and didn't explain more.

Zheng Hongjie paused as he had a weird expression on his face, looking at Jiang Chen. Although he was curious as to why the boss knew a lot about the third-world country but since the boss didn't plan to say more, he stopped asking.

"Third, this not something official so you only need to keep it in mind. I need you to have surplus goods every month."

It was okay to buy from the food store owner in the short term, but it was not a reliable long term situation. Since goods only went into the warehouse and never out, one or two times, it wouldn't cause any suspicion, but any more than that would be problematic. Once the Fishbone's population increases, it would have a higher demand for food, a food processing plant would be the safer choice.

"Surplus goods?" Zheng Hongjie almost thought he heard it wrong.

Surplus goods referred to goods overproduced. Usually, it would

either be given out to employees for free or discounted at a low price. It was the first time he heard someone wanted surplus good.

"Mhmm, I'll let you know the amount, you only need to keep that in mind. These goods don't need to be branded. It's not for selling. I have other uses."

After hearing Jiang Chen's explanation, Zheng Hongjie didn't ask more. Although it was an odd request, it was nothing complicated. Him, being a boss before, knew that he only needed to listen.

-

"Dad!"

"My cute daughter, haha, daddy is back." Zheng Hongjie hugged his daughter, who leaped towards him with a warm smile.

"Dad, who is this?" The adorable girl blinked her big eyes looking at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen kneeled down and looked at this energetic little girl with a smile. He then said with an amiable voice, "Uncle is your dad's friend. What's your name?"

"My name is Jiajia, I am in second grade at experimental school~" Jiajia replied in a cute tone.

Jiang Chen paused when he heard experimental school.

"Uncle, are you okay?" Jiajia tilted her head.

"Oh, nothing, hehe." Jiang Chen forced a laugh and answered in a light-hearted tone.

[Sun Jiao is probably still waiting for me on the other side...]

He peeked at his right hand. He tried this morning, but it still didn't work.

"You are back, and this is?" A virtuous looking woman came out of the kitchen and asked her husband when she saw Jiang Chen.

"This is my boss, Mr. Jiang." Zheng Hongjie smiled at his wife.

"You... finally sold the plant?"

"Mhmm, I did. But Mr. Jiang hired me to continue to run the plant."

Kong Jie looked at the smile she hasn't seen for a long time on her husband's face as her eyes became moist.

She took a deep breath in and to both Jiang Chen and Zheng Hongjie's surprise, she sincerely bowed towards Jiang Chen.

"Honey?"

"What, what are you doing?" Jiang Chen looked at her actions, not knowing how to react.

"For a while, Hongjie had been worried about the plant every day. He regretted trusting his friend's word. I was really scared, scared that one day if he couldn't think things through, he would leave us..." Tears began to emerge from Kong Jie's eyes.

Seeing the tears in his wife's eyes, Zheng Hongjie suddenly hugged her.

"Fool, there is no way I would leave you." The tough man's voice had a sob tone to it.

Jiang Chen silently watched them as a smile emerged on his face.

It would best not to interrupt them right now.

"Uncle." Jiajia looked up and blinked her big eyes at Jiang Chen.

"Hmm? Do you have something Little Jiajia?" Jiang Chen regathered his thoughts and knelt down again, rubbing her hair.

"Thank you," Jiajia said sweetly.

Haha.

Jiang Chen suddenly burst out laughing. Jiajia tilted her head and looked at the uncle in front of her, confused.

"No problem, Jiajia is very courteous." For some reason, his mood was delighted at this moment.

"Hehe." Because she received recognition, Jiajia smiled shyly.

After Zheng Hongjie had finished hugging his wife, he looked awkwardly at Jiang Chen. It was rather impolite to leave the guest hanging during a display of affection. The thin-skinned Kong Jie already fled to the kitchen. Jiajia tilted her head not knowing the situation, while Zheng Hongjie expressed his apology with a blushed face.

Jiang Chen, with a smile, motioned it was okay. He then began to chat with Zheng Hongjie on the sofa.

Zheng Hongjie was a talkative person as he was a taxi driver before he started a business. Although his experience was nowhere near as exciting as Jiang Chen, his depth of experience far exceeded Jiang Chen's.

His wife Kong Jie was a traditional woman, she virtuously cooked the meal and asked everyone to eat.

On the table, Jiang Chen and Zheng Hongjie had a few drinks. Jiajia curiously reached her hand towards the cup which made Jiang Chen chuckle more.

[Is this the feeling of home?]

He thought about it, and it did feel like this when he was at the wily old fox Wang Dehai's place.

He was suddenly envious of the feeling. He didn't know why.

Maybe it was time to go back to his hometown Lake City. Perhaps during New Year; it was already October.

Jiang Chen fell into a deep thought while watching the table filled with home cooked dishes.

But suddenly, a fierce door smashing sound transmitted from the outside, it forced him out of his thoughts.

"Who?" Jiang Chen was lost as he looked at Zheng Hongjie.

But Zheng Hongjie was confused as well. He exchanged a confused look with his wife before he got up and walked towards the door.

"You are?" Zheng Hongjie opened the door as he looked confusedly at the men in front.

"Fu*k you, we are here to collect our money!" A few young men in shirts saw that the door was opened and they didn't hesitate to force their way in.

"Wait, do you guys have the wrong person-"After being pushed aside, Zheng Hongjie struggled frightened.

"This is the loan agreement, three million. We are debt collectors." A young man with a buzz cut aggressively pushed Zheng Hongjie as they surrounded him, sneering.

"What are you guys doing!? Let Hongjie go. I am going to call the police!" Kong Jie took out the phone as she said shakingly.

"Police? Don't use cops to scare me. Let me get this straight. Do you know who my boss Sir Qiang is?" The young men said cockily. A man in shades stood behind him with a cigarette in his mouth. He didn't speak.

This guy was probably Sir Qiang.

"Dad!" Jiajia saw that her father was in trouble as her adorable face twisted, with tears in her eyes she wanted to run up.

"Don't come, Jiajia! Dad is okay." Zheng Hongjie immediately stopped her. Kong Jie also grabbed Jiajia and hugged her.

He took a deep breath as Zheng Hongjie looked at the young men. "I already prepared the money, and I'll borrow from my relatives some more in the next few days-"

"Next few days? I want to take care of this today –"

At this moment, the young man suddenly saw Jiang Chen, his thuggish look instantly froze.

To be honest, Jiang Chen was surprised from the start. He didn't expect to see him here again.

Jiang Chen mischievously examined the young men as he opened his mouth.

"Oh, what a coincidence, it's you again?"

Chapter 120: Don't do it, I'll do it myself

A young man who didn't finish high school followed by a few tattooed subordinates who also didn't finish high school. It would be more satisfying if he managed to hook up with a rebellious girl while still studying and act as the boss in front of a bunch of students. Although in front of a real "boss", Liu Hu was still nothing.

But compared to other punks, he was at least somewhat competent. He practiced a bit of martial arts, overlooked a construction site in the past and hustled cash from grade-schoolers... Ahem, that last part didn't count.

In any case, the Hongyi Gang leader, Liu Changlong, recognized his ability during a street brawl. After being released by the police, he joined Hongyi Gang, and through his fighting prowess, he finally climbed to "success."

However, his blissful life changed completely one day.

His brothers surrounded a b*tch with a beautiful face without a background during one of their modi operandi. Paying off debt was expected from anyone; otherwise, paying off using one's body also worked fine. It wasn't his first time doing something like this.

But an average-looking guy came by and not only he was physically strong, but he was also wielding a gun.

Liu Hu was scared, and it suddenly dawned on him that he

messed with the wrong person. The man didn't even bat an eye when he shot and maimed the leg of one of his thugs.

When he felt the hot muzzle pressing against his temple, his hands went cold, and his legs turned weak.

In short, although he had brought the money back, he failed to complete the task given to him by his boss (which was to bring the person back) and made an enemy with someone he shouldn't have.

This normally shouldn't be a big deal. After all, Liu Changlong had worked for Hongyi Gang for so many years and had earned plenty of merits, so he shouldn't be kicked out just because of this.

However, something unexpected happened which made him relive his former street thug life.

It went something like this.

Liu Changlong had received a phone call from his younger brother, Liu Anshan, asking him if he wanted to get rich. Liu Anshan recounted the story about Jiang Chen selling gold and had emphasized the fact that this person had a lot of gold, and there must be a stable source where it came from.

Liu Changlong was tempted but gold alone was not enough to sway him; however, if it was a stable source of income, that was something entirely different. He didn't care if it was a private mine or an ancient tomb. After all, how hard could it be to pry the secret

out of someone with little or no background on his turf?

Though before making a move, he cautiously investigated beforehand.

The result of the investigation frightened him. This Jiang Chen was no simple character.

Being the chairman of Future Technology was not the important point. The crucial point was when he hinted at his friends in politics, the response he received was: "Do not touch this guy." Even worse was the old city mayor personally made a directive with one word: "Support."

His friend only vaguely explained to him that if he dared to touch him, all his hideous secrets would be exposed the next day, then he would be incarcerated and he would be beyond saving.

The gang could only scare the ordinary people. Not taking into consideration the people the city official personally stated to support, anyone with some background would be difficult to offend. Because of this, his action couldn't be seen under the light.

Of course, he didn't dare to make a move on Jiang Chen at the moment. He also didn't dare to use Liu Hu who had offended Jiang Chen. Although Jiang Chen might not remember it, there was no point in taking the risk.

So Liu Hu lost his job and the thugs, who followed him, left one

by one. Fortunately, one of his drinking friends recognized his talent in debt collecting, so he employed him to work in a debt collection agency.

Scaring and hoaxing people. This combination would certainly put pressure on most ordinary citizens to pay off their debts. 28% was not a bad commission rate, especially the faster it was completed, the higher the commission would be. For the stubborn ones, some punches and kicks would easily solve the problem and as long as he didn't do anything extreme, the cops couldn't do anything to him.

But what he didn't expect was meeting the demon Jiang Chen again.

-

Liu Hu's face looked like he just ate a piece of sh*t. Jiang Chen ignored him and looked at the person behind him who got up and said, "Boss."

"Why can't you collect debt nicely? What's the point of being so angry and starting a conflict?"

The man wearing a pair of sunglasses looked over when he heard the words and guffawed.

"Are you involving yourself in something that's none of your concern?"

"None of my concern? Isn't that the job of an employer?" Jiang Chen surprisingly shrugged. His face betraying not the slightest hint of fear.

The one called Sir Qiang burst out laughing then slowly took off his shades. The thugs saw their boss was about to make a move, so they maliciously surrounded Jiang Chen.

"You son of a b*tch! Who do you think you are?"

"Boss Jiang, this is my business, so you don't have to stand up for me—" Zheng Hongjie smiled bitterly while trying to persuade Jiang Chen.

He did not expect that his former good friend would make use of a debt collection agency to make him pay back the money he owed. He probably thought he would run away since one of their friends, whom they also had drunk with regularly, ran away after being deep in debt after losing big in the stock market.

"Sir Qiang, you, you can't touch this person." Liu Hu rushed forward to stop his brother but Li Qiang didn't care at all. Debt collection was all about the aggression. What's the point in collecting debt if they would just get scared, they should have just studied law instead.

"Can't touch him? I, Li Qiang—"

"Although I don't know who you are—I won't tolerate you cursing my mother." Jiang Chen's eyes narrowed and fastly becoming enraged.

"Funny, daddy didn't even curse. I'm going to fu*k you up—" Li Qiang's eyebrows shot up provocatively and he became even more aggressive. The man in front of him didn't look like he could fight.

However, before he could even complete his words, his eyes began to blur as he flew into the closet.

Kong Jie covered Jiajia's tiny head to prevent her from witnessing this violent scene. Zheng Hongjie looked dumbly at his boss. He could not imagine his boss, who was not even taller than him, had the ability to send someone flying with a kick.

When the thugs saw that their boss was beaten, they hesitated for a moment before lunging at Jiang Chen with their fists out.

Jiang Chen let out a sigh, his eyes suddenly turned fierce and then he stretched out his hands.

Liu Hu, on the other hand, didn't make a move. He smiled wryly and closed his eyes. He had experience firsthand how vicious he could get.

The fight ended almost instantly with the previously mocking hooligans splayed awkwardly on the ground.

What a joke. With Muscle Strength +30, even a boxing champion wouldn't be his opponent. With Reflex +32, even if they sprouted two more hands, it would yield the same result.

Jiang Chen shook his fist and looked at Liu Hu, who was standing on the side, with a sardonic smile.

"You don't need to do anything; I'll do it myself." Liu Hu smiled bitterly before raising his fist ready to knock himself out.

"Don't be nervous. Do I look that vicious to you? Just hold still, and everything will be okay," Jiang Chen smilingly told him.

"Is there even a point of watching?" Of course, Liu Hu would not dare to say it out loud. His raised hand was frozen in midair, and he had a peculiar expression on his face.

"I thought you were collecting debts for Hongyi Gang? What, the pay is too low, so you started your own business?" Jiang Chen watched Liu Hu thoughtfully and a hint of mockery laced his tone.

Zheng Hongjie and Kongjie were utterly stunned. Jiajia was flapping her hands in her mother's arms, wanting to get a good look at her surrounding. Liu Hu glanced at his brothers on the floor and sighed.

"Got fired."

Liu Hu explained everything that happened after that night

including the things he knew and the thing he shouldn't have known but heard.

When he heard the gold store manager, Liu Anshan, had leaked his information and the Hongyi Gang leader, Liu Changlong, was ready to make a move on him, Jiang Chen cursed in his mind.

Although he was not afraid of these scums of society, what happened here made him reflect on the carelessness of his past actions. Selling gold attracted unwanted attentions of a different kind. He was lucky that his improvement skyrocketed that made Liu Changlong backed off right away or else he would be facing far more treachery and danger.

"All right, you may now excuse yourself." Jiang Chen didn't want to waste too much time on a cannon fodder.

Upon hearing those words, Liu Hu immediately left, leaving his comrades on the floor without a second thought.

Zheng Hongjie saw that Liu Hu had left. He glanced at the thugs on the floor and asked Jiang Chen with a troubled tone, "Mr. Jiang, how do we take care of this?"

Jiang Chen watched the people lying on the ground and scratched his head in annoyance.

Three of them probably had their ribs broken and two of them definitely had their hands fractured. Li Qiang was knocked out

with just one kick. Because he didn't fight that often, he didn't know how to control his power.

Jiang Chen secretly activated fury and when he saw that no one had died, he secretly let out a sigh of relief.

He took out the phone from his pocket and called 110.

"Hello, 110? I want to report a crime. This is what happened." Better blame it on them first.

After explaining the situation, Jiang Chen hesitated for a bit before calling Wang Zhiyong's number.

"Hello, Brother Chen, what's up?" Wang Zhiyong's brash voice came through from the other side of the phone.

"Just a bit of trouble. Some punks were giving me trouble, so I injured all of them," Jiang Chen cut straight to the point.

The last time they had a drink, they started calling each other brother. So in the moment of trouble, the only one Jiang Chen could think of was him.

"Fu*k, who dares to touch my brother? Where are you? I'll bring my people to beat their asses," Wang Zhiyong cursed and was instantly incensed.

Jiang Chen was speechless at his words. This guy didn't even inquire about the injuries but was already ready to give them a beating once again.

"Ahem, I already beat them down but I have to go the police station to give my statement. Do you have some connections with the police?"

"Woah, you beat all of them? Don't worry about the evidence, it's self-defense. Although I am not close to the police, I am tight with their superiors." Wang Zhiyong chortled.

"Er, I hit them first."

"Don't worry, if I said it's self-defense, it's self-defense! You only need to say that during the investigation."

[Damn! Political influence sure is a great thing.]

Chapter 121: Experiencing the World

Wang Zhiyong had already talked with his buddy, so the cop who came did not say anything at all. In the spirit of civilized law enforcement, they politely invited Jiang Chen to the police station to gather evidence.

As for the people lying on the ground, they didn't experience the same privilege and regardless of how badly they were beaten, they were all handcuffed and shoved into the police car.

Zheng Hongjie wanted to go with Jiang Chen. Although he did not have any connection with the police force, he could still stand as a witness, but Jiang Chen waved his hand indicating it was unnecessary and urged him to settle the family problem first and quickly pay off the debt.

Jiang Chen lent him the remaining 300,000 and told him that he could pay it off with his monthly salary.

Under the grateful look of the entire family, Jiang Chen followed the courteous police downstairs.

Seeing the humiliated expression on Li Qiang's face, Jiang Chen halted, smiled and pulled out his car key, waved it in front of him and then got in his own car.

Because it was just for the sake of formality, he didn't even need to go in the police car. But the hooligans who stirred up trouble would at least be locked up for half a month. Naturally someone

would teach them some lessons, however, there were not a lot of opportunities for them to prove themselves in front their superiors.

After coming to the police station, Jiang Chen cooperated and provided the evidence. The witness statement was not even needed before the whole thing was settled as a legitimate self-defense case.

When leaving the police station, he accidentally ran into Wang Zhiyong who was heading towards him.

Li Gangming, who was driving the car, awkwardly smiled after seeing Jiang Chen. Due to his minor altercation with Jiang Chen in the past, and the latter seemingly exceptional relationship with his superior, he was afraid that Jiang Chen would seek vengeance on him.

But he was clearly overthinking since Jiang Chen didn't even take that little thing to heart and responded with a friendly smile.

"Gangming, drive the car back to the station for me. I'll have to take my brother out to play tonight."

After sending Li Gangming off, Wang Zhiyong walked happily to Jiang Chen.

"Fu*k, the training during these last few days is killing me. I finally got the change to go out."

"What's the point of being a soldier if you don't train?" Jiang Chen laughingly mocked him. "If you don't want to go, who can force you to?"

"Hehe, my father forced me to go." Wang Zhiyong laughed awkwardly and touched his nose then changed the subject. "Enough bullsh*t, I'll drive you to experience the world."

Jiang Chen rolled his eyes and opened the car door. Wang Zhiyong unabashedly sat on the driver seat.

"What's experiencing the world?" Jiang Chen asked and helplessly sat on the passenger seat.

"You'll know once we get there." Wang Zhiyong smiled mysteriously and then started the car and admiringly exclaimed, "Maybach S600, limited edition. Fu*k, I am about the same age as you, how are you so rich?"

"Do you want one? My treat." Jiang Chen laughed.

To Jiang Chen's surprise, Wang Zhiyong shook his head.

"I don't dare, I have a lot of brothers who have them, so I can just drive around whenever the urge strikes. Not to brag but I even drove a Lamborghini, Koenigsegg before. A friend of mine was even prepared to give me one when he saw I like it, but I still refused."

"So virtuous? Then why are you still a soldier? You will receive a

lot of commendations if you were to become a politician." Jiang Chen laughed.

Wang Zhiyong also chuckled and continued, "It's not about being virtuous, you're overthinking. For those people who want to join my force, I wouldn't even think about it unless it is at least 1000."

Only Wang Zhiyong would dare to say this out loud.

"I only need enough money to spend. I don't have much interest in being a millionaire. The friendship would change if I accept my friend's money," Wang Zhiyong said casually but it certainly hinted deeper meanings.

Jiang Chen could not help but grow astonished at his words.

He thought this guy was just a blockhead descendant of an influential politician who only knew how to do reckless things with his buddies, but he certainly had his own convictions in life.

It was apparent that he truly considered Jiang Chen as his friend. When there was money involved, the dynamics of relationship would change.

"Don't think too much. I simply have too much money to spend and had no other intentions," Jiang Chen said and chuckled.

Wang Zhiyong also laughed.

"Let's not talk about this anymore. Oh yeah, you created Future 1.0, right?"

"Yes, are you using it?" Jiang Chen gave him a surprised look.

"Hehe, the holy trinity of holy-up apps, even better than Momo by a large margin. Could you turn me into VIP5? That shouldn't be too much trouble, right?"

"Not at all, give me your account number." Jiang Chen said in a forthright manner.

He texted Wang Zhiyong's Little White's account number to Xia Shiyu. Upgrading to VIP5 only needed a word from him—the chairman.

After the car arrived at the suburbs, Jiang Chen looked outside of the window, as the buildings became more and more common, he could not help but get confused. He thought Wang Zhiyong would take him somewhere fun downtown and did not expect him to drive to the outskirts.

"Well, aren't you curious?" As though seemingly aware to Jiang Chen's confusion, Wang Zhiyong arrogantly smiled.

"That's right, what fun is there in the suburbs?" Jiang Chen did not hesitate to ask what was boggling his mind.

"We're almost there. It's a nice place."

With a mysterious smile, Wang Zhiyong turned the steering wheel into another corner.

After the bend, Jiang Chen had a sudden feeling of enlightenment. At a glance, he could very well discern the destination of this trip.

The European style structure looked out-of-place in the less busy neighborhood just like a castle amidst the ghetto. Surprisingly, its remote location did not impact its popularity at all. From the nearly full parking lot, not only was this place popular, but it was not a place for ordinary people.

Jiang Chen's expression could not help but turn odd while looking at the magnificent building that was decorated exquisitely.

The name was very familiar to him.

The bright and colorful words were: Hongyi Private Club.

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After parking the car, Wang Zhiyong and Jiang Chen were ushered to the door by a server.

"Why did we come to this place?" Jiang Chen asked while

walking.

"Hmm? Is there any problem?" Wang Zhiyong froze.

"Ahem, Hongyi Gang and I had a little bit of conflict."

Upon hearing this, Wang Zhiyong's expression was rather odd, then he burst out laughing and patted Jiang Chen on the shoulder.

"If you mean those goofballs, don't worry, they don't have anything to do with this place. I heard about Liu Changlong from my friend. He oversaw the security of a construction site for my brother in the past, then he got transferred here as a security guard. My brother saw that he was doing good so he told him to open a night club. That guy seemed to have established more businesses and created the Hongyi Gang. That club used this private club name to help itself out. Nothing worth being bothered about.

Wang Zhiyong then took out a card as he arrogantly waved it between his fingers.

"VIP card, my brother gave it to me. Everything is free of charge. Tonight is on me."

Although Jiang Chen was curious who his brother was, he didn't say anything anymore as he accepted the gratitude.

He took out his phone from his pocket and sent a text to Ayesha.

[I might be a little late for dinner, no need to wait for me.]

Suddenly, his finger froze in place.

"Who are you texting? Your girlfriend?" Wang Zhiyong grinned and poked his head to peek at the screen.

Jiang Chen quickly moved the phone away and gave Wang Zhiyong a dirty look and pressed send.

"Don't worry, we are all men. I understand." Wang Zhiyong patted Jiang Chen on the shoulder and then walked to the door laughing.

Although he had an inkling as to what kind of place this was, he finally confirmed it when he saw the look in Wang Zhiyong's eyes.

Jiang Chen smiled wryly.

Those eyes filled with love appeared in his mind.

[Fu*k, this guilty feeling is unreal.]

Chapter 122: Hongyi Private Club

The main colors of the building were gold and light gray, an elegant bronze chandelier was hanging in the central dome, and on both sides of the aisle were lined with exquisite European-style marble columns. Under his feet was a soft, red carpet and above his head were star-spangled crystals.

This was just the lobby on the first floor.

Those who occasionally passed by were very quiet as the decoration naturally made people slow down their footsteps. Sitting at the front reception was a gorgeous receptionist, wearing a light makeup on and smiling gracefully at the two of them.

"The spa here is not bad. You should try it. Hehe, but I recommend the activity on the third floor." Wang Zhiyong laughingly winked at him.

Based on his expression, Jiang Chen knew what type of service to expect on the third floor.

It was obvious that he was a regular at this place since the receptionist appeared to be familiar with him. Without even looking at the card, she started asking what kind of service he would avail.

"The usual for me. What about you?" Wang Zhiyong turned to Jiang Chen.

Feeling awkward, Jiang Chen looked at the list of services a few times. He hadn't been to this kind of place before so he could not understand the types of service they were offering.

Spa should be about bathing, right?

But what in the world were the goddesses spreading flowers and lotus coming out of the water?

Only the acupuncture and massage sounded normal.

However, since he was already here, it would be rude to just turn around and walk away.

As Jiang Chen pondered on this matter, he decided to go for something light. Truthfully, he already had a beautiful "wife" back home, so he had little interest in other flowers. He subconsciously thought this would be that kind of place.

But just as he was about to speak, he heard an unfamiliar voice.

"Brother Yong, why didn't you tell me that you'll be here to play. Haha, are you done with your training?" A young man wearing a pair of glasses walked over with a smile on his face and warmly greeted Wang Zhiyong.

Jiang Chen couldn't tell the price of his suit, but from the aura

that the man gave off, he felt that he was not a simple character. He didn't look anything special, and the only thing that left an impression on him was a pair of squinting eyes.

Whether he was laughing or not, his eyes appeared to be perpetually squinting.

"Nope. I played hooky. Haha, let's not talk about this. Let me introduce you to someone."

Wang Zhiyong put his arm around Jiang Chen's shoulder. "This is the chairman of Future Technology. Jiang Chen, this is Zhou Zihao, a major shareholder of this private club."

"What major shareholder, only a bunch of friends making some pocket money." Zhou Zihao modestly smiled and then looked at Jiang Chen. "I am nowhere comparable to Mr. Jiang. Accomplished at a young age, the Future Technology even made it in Wallstreet Journal. This is truly giving our country glory."

"I don't deserve such praise, I just got lucky," Jiang Chen said while smiling; however, in his mind, he was secretly thinking.

Zhou Zihao was not someone who was easy to deal with.

He never thought these second generations of politicians were easy to fool, but rather himself was always at a disadvantage in terms of foresight and shrewdness.

Take Wang Zhiyong for example, Jiang Chen always thought that he was just a little blockhead, but the words he said in the car completely altered his perception of him in his mind. Wang Zhiyong knew too much but he was simply not interested in politics, and that's why he always acted in a straightforward manner.

On the other hand, Jiang Chen couldn't see through Zhou Zihao.

[His name is Zhou? Could it be the Zhou family?]

Thinking of this, Jiang Chen started to become more cautious.

"No, no." Zhou Zihao offered his hand and shook hand with Jiang Chen. "Compared to my not-so-accomplished brother, Mr. Jiang's corporation achieve far greater things in the tech industry."

Upon hearing these words, Jiang Chen's mind turned quickly.

Brother? Does that mean his brother is in charge of military artificial intelligence? But what does this statement mean? A friendly gesture? What kind of relationship does he have with his brother? Competitive or close? He only knew that Wang Family and Zhou Family were cut from the same cloth, but he didn't know the intricacies of these political dynasties.

After all, only a few months ago, he was a nobody.

Wang Zhiyong suddenly laughed and patted Jiang Chen on the

shoulder, which interrupted his train of thought and said, "That's enough. Why are you being serious about when we're having fun? Zihao always pretends to be poetic. Don't you feel tired speaking like this?"

"Ahem, this is not a serious talk but only casual greetings." Zhou Zihao squinted his eyes and smiled

.

"Future Technology is only a start-up company so it doesn't deserve such praise." Jiang Chen laughed and let his hands go.

"Oh yeah, Zihao, one of your younger brothers, Liu Changlong, seemed to be embroiled in a conflict with Jiang Chen, you take care of it." Wang Zhiyong chuckled as he looked at Zhou Zihao.

"Liu Changlong?" Zhou Zihao frowned, thought for a moment before his eyebrows relaxed. "Oh, him. Don't worry, Mr. Jiang, I'll give you an account of this."

Jiang Chen waved his hands. "It's really nothing. Although he did plot against me, now he knew better, so don't worry about it."

"That won't do." Zhou Zihao shook his head in seriousness. "Today will be on me as a token of apology."

"Pshh, I already said it's on me." Wang Zhiyong slapped the table with a grin.

Zhou Zihao squinted at him, "You? The card says that it is only free for you. How many people did you treat with it?"

Wang Zhiyong shamelessly laughed and waive his hand nonchalantly. "Don't worry about it. Just pretend I used it twice."

"Is it the first time for Mr. Jiang?" Zhou Zihao glanced at him.

Jiang Chen nodded, slightly embarrassed, "Hmm."

Zhou Zihao glanced at the reception, beckoned and whispered a few words to the receptionist.

He then turned around to Jiang Chen, with a smile, "Sincet this is your first time, then let's start with something light. What do you think, Mr. Jiang?"

[What's something light?]

Jiang Chen was still confused but politely smiled. "Then I'll listen to the host."

"What about brother Yong?" Zhi Zihao looked at Wang Zhiyong.

"Haha, I don't play with rookies, you know." Wang Zhiyong waggled his eyebrows and smiled devilishly.

Zhou Zihao sighed and smiled wryly. "Take care of your kidney."

Wang Zhiyong was instantly provoked by the words, he slapped the table with bulging eyes.

"Fu*k, my kidneys are great! I am a soldier!"

"How many times have you actually trained?"

Under the direction of the staff, Jiang Chen headed to the second floor and due to his curiosity, secretly examined the place along the way.

On the surface, it appeared to be just an ordinary private club. In the lobby of the second floor, there were pool tables and sofas. The back of the wall was a bar for serving drinks. On the other side was a gym with only two rows of treadmills.

The common feature of these appliances was no one was using it. Clearly, they were only there as a decoration.

The beautiful staff with a bright smile led Jiang Chen pass through the bar into a hallway where they entered a finely decorated environment.

"Sir, your room number is 204. If you need anything else, you can call me through the phone inside," the staff stopped, turned her

head and smiled and said to Jiang Chen.

"Hmm, okay."

Seeing that that the staff had already left, Jiang Chen looked at the card in his hand and hesitated.

[Fu*k, I am not a virgin, why am I hesitating!"]

He cursed in his mind as Jiang Chen bit the bullet and swiped the card on the door.

The door opened, it was still soft carpet on the floor, but the door was lined with shoe shelves, which meant he needed to take his shoes off upon entering the room. The faint yellow wallpaper and the dim lighting added intimate ambient to the room.

In the middle of the room, there was an oddly shaped bathtub, the fluid looking shape along had some sophisticated looking buttons on the side. The water was ready, and a gorgeous lady in a bathrobe was standing beside it while smiling.

"Hello sir, do you need help changing?"

"No need." Jiang Chen shyly refused.

"Is it your first time here, sir?" the beautiful woman smiled with understanding.

"Hehe, eh?"

[Fu*k, this is awkward.]

Jiang Chen mocked himself in his mind. Embarrassed, he scratched his face.

The girl covered her mouth and smiled when she heard the response. Then she politely looked at Jiang Chen and continued, "Sir, if this is your first time, just follow my instruction. First, please take off your clothes and leave them over there."

"Take off my clothes? Here?" Jiang Chen thought he heard it wrong.

"Yes, unless sir you want to bath with your clothes on?" The girl winked and said with a smile, "Do you need me to turn around?"

"Ahem, it's okay. Help yourself." Jiang Chen's face turned red and coughed.

[Fu*k, being this shy is not like me!]

Jiang Chen swore in his mind as he made up his mind and undressed.

"Do you exercise regularly sir?"

With a cheerful smile, the beauty looked at Jiang Chen without avoiding his embarrassing part, then stepped forward to help Jiang Chen fold his clothes and guide him to lie in the bathtub.

"No, why?"

"Nothing, I just think you are very muscular." The beauty maintained her smile, held Jiang Chen's head gently in the right spot and then she leaned her head—intentionally or not—closer to his ear, "If I were to be embraced tightly by you, it would sure feel great."

The voice was full of magnetism, Jiang Chen felt his scalp become numb and his blood pressure spiked.

"Relax, close your eyes."

Jiang Chen obediently followed. He felt a pair of hands touched the acupuncture points on his face pliantly but with just enough force and soothed each of his stiff nerves.

The water level in the bathtub gradually decreased. The tiny water outlet sprayed out warm mist and gently washed his entire body. This acute feeling was quite intoxicating and along with superb massage skills made Jiang Chen only feel relaxed.

The tension and fatigue built up through the days of continuous battle were washed away in an instant. As if all the burden had

been wiped away by the warm water stream and gentle hands.

It felt like he was in the clouds.

It appeared like he had thought too much, it was not some intense sexual service but just a unique massage.

This beautiful woman's technique was skillful. She first used a word to cause his blood flow to speed up, then used a soothing massage to make his muscle and mind fall into a deep state of relaxation.

That feeling was even better than the "the embarrassing" act.

The small hands gradually moved to his chest and further down.

The water level rose again as the beauty appeared to have pressed a button on the side as the water in the bathtub vibrated.

"Sir, your muscle is really nice."

The voice in his ears sounded magical as it flirted through his relaxed nerves. Just like an ASMR guiding him to deep relaxation.

"Skin is really nice too."

"Relax, just leave your body to me."

"

Hmm, Jiang Chen had long since done that. Because it was too relaxing, his breathing became rhythmic and he fell into a slumber.

On the other side, Zhou Zihao who sent Wang Zhiyong upstairs took out his phone.

Chapter 123: Seeking Forgiveness

Wang Zhiyong was ushered to the third floor, but Zhou Zihao didn't go with him.

Wang Zhiyong knew his friend disdained those types of girls, so he didn't invite him. Likewise, Zhou Zihao knew what type he preferred, so he pulled out his phone.

They were all smart people, it's just that they were pursuing different things.

Wang Zhiyong only wanted to spend his days as a second generation officer. To gain harmless, small benefits from his friends—no need to be powerful—just to live free and comfortably.

But Zhou Zihao was different. He was the second son in the family. Honestly, he didn't have the best relationship with Zhou Qiangwu, but his father clearly preferred his brother over him. Zhou Family's influence was in Shangjin, but he came to Wanghai city partly because of this.

Although he always looked indifferent on the outside, the fact was he longed for power more than anyone else. He desired recognition. The reason why he started this private club with a bunch of silk trousers was a way for him to establish connections.

Did Wang Zhiyong really bring Jiang Chen along because he wanted to play with women? Did he really just casually brought up the conflict between Jiang Chen and one of his dogs? In fact, Wang

Zhiyong was very clever. He clearly knew Zhou Zihao wished to befriend Jiang Chen so he deliberately mentioned it.

"Call Liu Changlong." He commanded Little White as Zhou Zihao patiently waited for the call to get connected.

"Hello? Boss, what's going on?" The fawning voice of Liu Changlong came from the other side.

"Did you offend a man called Jiang Chen?" Zhou Zihao said leisurely.

Liu Changlong's heart immediately thudded as he cursed in his mind. Although he didn't know why his boss was asking this, the tone did not sound good at all.

"No, no, one of my worthless underlings had a conflict with him. I already kicked him out. It has nothing to do with me."

Hearing this, Zhou Zihao did not have the slightest intention to let this go. His face did not have the same amicable expression when he was chatting with Jiang Chen and Wang Zhiyong.

"Hoho, everyone else knows what you were plotting, but you're pretty smart and know when to back down."

To say it plainly, Liu Changlong was only a dog raised by the people above.

When Changlong heard this, he sweated coldly as he deliberated the intention of his boss.

Did he want him to do it or did he acknowledge him for being smart enough for not doing it?

"Let's put it this way, I want to get to know this person. Can you think of a way for me?" Zhou Zihao was laughing but the tone was filled with cutting coldness, "Someone has to take the knife, right?"

This sentence almost frightened Liu Changlong to death. He finally realized that his boss wanted to sell him out as a favor.

"Boss, boss, I, I—"

"Stop talking nonsense, I'll give you a chance. You have half a minute to think who you're willing to throw under the bus." Zhou Zihao chuckled.

Liu Changlong's hand that was holding the phone uncontrollably trembled while his underlings dumbfoundedly looked at their frightened boss. They didn't understand why their normally glamorous boss would be quivering like a dog.

That's right, just like a dog.

Liu Changlong secretly complained. He didn't even do it yet. If

Jiang Chen didn't know he was plotting against him, it would be okay but somehow he figured it out.

Somone had to be thrown under the bus as a favor.

What to do? Use Liu Anshan as a scapegoat?

A fierce glint flashed in Liu Changlong's eyes. Although it was his brother, there was no way he could care about family now.

But just as he was about to say Liu Anshan's name, another name popped into his head.

Fang Yuanyuan.

He remembered his son, brimming with confidence, took a bunch of hooligans to extort someone called Jiang Chen. He heard from the sl*t he played with before that it was a rich guy without any background. Fortunately, his son asked him before he actually did something. If they had already done something, there was no way this could be resolved.

Although when he first plotted against Jiang Chen, it had nothing to do with Fang Yuanyuan; however, she did call his son so she could be the scapegoat.

"Have you thought of someone?"

"I, I did! Boss, there was this girl—this is what happened." Liu Changlong submissively held the phone and explained the story about Fang Yuanyuan.

Once a former crush, now a sl*t provoked the gang to make a move on him.

Zhou Zihao captured the three key concepts and gave it a thought.

He only needed a favor as a stepping stone. Maybe Jiang Chen would be the key to defeating his brother. Based on Liu Changlong's description, this woman seemed to have fit the criteria.

Also, when he heard it was a woman, he suddenly had other ideas.

"Bring that person here. You know what I'm talking about." Zhou Zihao's smile was peculiar.

"Yes, yes!" Liu Changhong held the phone while his back was completely drenched with sweat.

Liu Changlong hung up the phone and glanced at the thugs around him.

The thugs were all silent and afraid to look at their boss in the eyes.

"Diaozi, go capture her back, I'll give you one hour." Liu Changlong said emotionally. He regained his tyrannical bearing as if the submissive conversation never happened before.

"Yes." Diaozi nodded and hastily left.

Liu Changlong leaned against the chair and rubbed his tired forehead. A smile appeared on his face.

-

After comfortably leaving the room, Jiang Chen twisted his neck and felt his entire body's weariness was washed clean.

It was already 5:30, the staff was waiting at the door and led him to the dining hall.

Once he arrived, Jiang Chen saw that Wang Zhiyong and Zhou Zihao were already waiting there.

"Yo, did you have fun?" Wang Zhiyong waggled his eyebrows.

"Not bad, I fell asleep in the latter half." Jiang Chen smiled and pulled a chair to sit down.

"Such a shame, the best way to enjoy it is to close your eyes and relax your body—" Zhou Zihao was still the with same squinting

eyes as he picked up a cup of tea and took a sip.

"Enough enough, don't bring your good living philosophy here. Waiter, bring out the dishes and alcohol," Wang Zhiyong called out.

"Do you take this for a hotel?" Zhou Zihao was speechless and then signaled the waiter on the side to bring out the dishes.

The dazzling dishes were placed on the table and the gorgeous staff slightly leaned forward to pour a glass of wine for each one of them.

"Wine can help with blood circulation. This is a good stuff. Is Mr. Jiang okay with it?" Zhou Zihao smilingly raised his wine glass for a toast.

Based on the purity of the color, the wine must have been very expensive, but Zhou Zihao did not mention the year and brand; his shrewdness truly ran deep.

"Pretty good, but I don't drink much." Jiang Chen smiled and raised and clank his glass with him.

"Zihao had always like these fine things. Who would drink this sour wine?" Wang Zhiyong jested but his hand was still on the wine glass.

After a couple rounds of drink, the three started coversing with

one another. Wang Zhiyong was surprisingly quiet and Zhou Zihao was talking a lot more.

Jiang Chen had a feeling that Zhou Zihao was trying to befriend him. His attitude made him feel wary. Logically speaking, his artificial intelligence was almost overlapping with Zhou Family's craft. In other words, Zhou Zihao was not popular at home? So he wanted to form a relationship with me?

Jiang Chen was not repulsed by Zhou Zihao's friendly gesture. After a few glasses of wine, they started calling each other brothers.

"Brother Jiang, I'll have to offer you a glass one more time. This glass counts as me not controlling my subordinates and causing problems for you." Zhou Zihao suddenly stood up, smilingly offered a toast and drained the glass of wine.

To drink wine like this was a waste of a luxury.

Seeing this, Jiang Chen also hurriedly stood up and smiled wryly.

"There is no need, Brother Zhou. I don't really mind and he hadn't done anything yet."

Zhou Zihao waved his hand and then signaled the server on the side. The waiter courteously nodded and walked out in haste.

After a while, the door opened.

Jiang Chen saw a strange man came in.

The person was sporting a buzz cut. His face had a certain kind of resoluteness but also had a terrified expression on his face. Age wise, he was at least 10 years older than Zhou Zihao.

Jiang Chen's eyes narrowed slightly as he guessed the identity of this 30-year-old man.

Liu Changlong, the leader of Hongyi Gang and the man who plotted against him.

Wang Zhiyong watched while he carried his glass with a gloating expression. Zhou Zihao didn't look at Liu Changlong and only stared at Jiang Chen with the same smiling expression. Jiang Chen glanced at Liu Changlong and then questioningly looked at Zhou Zihao.

"Ahem." Zhou Zihao lightly coughed.

There was a "pudong" sound as Liu Changlong, a man 180 cm tall, dropped to his knees and knocked his head on the ground.

"I, Liu Changlong, was blinded and listened to wrongdoers' incitement and planned to kidnapped your parents. I hope Sir Jiang Chen to forgive me and let me go like a fart."

Jiang Chen was stunned. He really did not expect Liu Changlong was planning to abduct his parents outside of the province. He also didn't think that before he even made a move, Zhou Zihao had already brought him here to apologize.

Wang Zhiyong looked at Liu Changlong who was kowtowing and seemed to wear an expression that this was to be expected.

Zhou Zihao still didn't spare a glance at Liu Changlong and remained his focus on Jiang Chen while smiling.

"Is Brother Jiang satisfied with this result?"

Jiang Chen's throat moved and laughed awkwardly, "Very satisfied."

He didn't know what to say, and though he disdained these scums of society and was enraged by the fact that Liu Changlong planned to use his parents to threaten him, he did back down.

Zhou Zihao with his squinting eyes was a ruthless character and not at all easy to deal with. In any case, he owed him a favor.

Jiang Chen thought to himself but his expression remained the same.

When Zhou Zihao saw that Jiang Chen had relented, he then waved his hand.

The beautiful waitress on the side, holding a bottle of about 1 liter of Baiju, came over and place it in front of Liu Changlong with a smile.

"You know what to do," Zhou Zihao said casually.

A cold sweat rolled across Liu Changlong's forehead but when he thought of Zhou Zihao's intention, he gritted his teeth, opened the lid with his teeth and began drinking.

That was 1 litter of Baijiu. The alcohol concentration would certainly not be low.

Jiang Chen who was watching on the side was secretly scared.

Zhou Zihao was watching on coldly while Wang Zhiyong was still showing an interested expression.

As soon as Liu Chonglong had finished the bottle, he immediately fell unconscious on the ground. The waiter nearby looked at Zhou Zihao and after seeing him nod, he carried the unconscious Liu Changlong outside.

Liu Changlong was going straight to the hospital; he was definitely biting the bullet on this one.

Jiang Chen was secretly speechless but did not have an ounce of

sympathy, though he was more and more scared of Zhou Zihao's ruthlessness.

This man is ruthless!

"Zihao, you should pay extra care to those people under you. Are you not afraid of dirtying your own hands?" Wang Zhiyong said and chuckled.

"Ahem, even a rat has a rat's value," Zhou Zihao said then turned to look at Jiang Chen, "I hope you won't mind what happened today. Brother Jiang, I truly value our friendship. If this rat dares to dirty your shoes again, I'd throw him into the Huangpu River."

"No need for that, Brother Zhou is really a great friend. It's my honor to become your friend," Jiang Chen said.

Thankfully, they were not enemies.

"There is no need to go back today. Why don't stay for the night? Zihao prepared you another fun show. Hehe." Wang Zhiyong burst into laughter.

"Ahem, Brother Yong, spoiler is not good." Zhou Zihao lightly coughed.

"What type of show?" Jiang Chen asked casually.

"Trust me, you will love it." Zhou Zihao smiled mysteriously after continuing, "Would Brother Jiang give me this chance?"

It would be impolite to refuse.

Jiang Chen only debated for a second before quickly replying, "Then, I'll listen to the host."

There was nothing to it but say yes.

After dinner, it was still the same smiling waitress. Jiang Chen was led into a quiet room on the third floor under her guidance.

"The noise insulation here is excellent. Enjoy yourself." The staff smiled ambiguously and backed out of the room.

Jiang Chen touched his nose shyly, stood at the entrance for a while before finally going into the room.

[Looks like I am not going home tonight.]

Thinking of this, Jiang Chen pushed the exquisitely decorated door open, but after entering the room, he was surprised to see someone he didn't expect.

"It's you?"

Jiang Chen's expression could not be more strange.

Chapter 124: It's really ironic

"It's you?"

Jiang Chen looked strangely at Fang Yuanyuan sitting on the chair.

Although she was sitting, the posture could not be described as elegant.

Her face was filled with horror, her hair was disheveled, and her lips were covered with black tape. Her limbs were tied up by nylon ropes in an indecent "M" style on the chair. Although her clothes were intact, she was without any kind of decency in this position.

Next to the bedside table was a laptop, the bright screen projected an audio file.

As if Jiang Chen had guessed something based on Fang Yuanyuan's appearance, he stepped forward and gently pressed the play button.

"Yo, girl, did you miss your brother?"

"Pervert... Let me tell you something, I have a classmate who made a fortune... No, no, clean background, I know that guy, he just got lucky."

Jiang Chen quietly listened to the voice recording and stared at Fang Yuanyuan with a faint smile on his face.

Fang Yuanyuan's evaded Jiang Chen's gaze, afraid to make an eye contact with him.

Regardless of how unbelievable it was for her, this was the reality. The foolish fly that once buzzed around her like a fly had become someone that could control her life and death.

That's right, life and death.

When she was on her way home from work and was forcibly tied here, a frightening looking man told her:

Two options.

First: satisfied the man name Jiang Chen regardless of what he would do. Afterward, she would receive \$10,000 as compensation.

Second: become fish bait in the Huangpu River.

She had never seen anything like this before, so she got scared that she almost peed her pants. Her captors didn't talk more as they skillfully tied her on the chair and threw her in the wretched room.

The center of the room had a round bed and beside the closet was

some strange bondage devices as well as some "frightening" S tools...

Fang Yuanyuan looked at the man whom she had hurt before, horrified. She was scared, and she feared that he would use those awful things on her. If he actually did, she would have to endure the pain.

At this time, the phone suddenly rang.

Jiang Chen grabbed the phone as if he already guessed who it was. Not in the least bit surprised, he pressed the button.

"Hello."

"Hehe, is Brother Jiang satisfied with the show?" Without a doubt, the lyrical sounding tone was definitely from squinting eyes.

"Brother Zhou is worrying too much. If you really want to cooperate with me, you only need to tell me. Why are you using these low-level tricks?" Jiang Chen's voice was slightly cold.

There was a distinct pause on the other side of the line.

"Brother Jiang? I don't really understand what you mean."

"Oh, yeah? If you want to watch porn, then I can give you a few

gigabyte of torrents. What's with the fetish of watching things live?" Jiang Chen hung up the phone, put it in his pocket then threw it in the storage dimension.

He didn't take his hand out of the pocket as he took out an EMP grenade directly from the storage dimension and detonated it.

A faint static noise was heard in the room. The laptop instantly turned black as a trail of smoke came from the fan. The light bulb on the ceiling flickered a few times before the light abruptly dimmed down. As if to confirm his suspicion, Jiang Chen keenly caught a glimpse of a few wisps of smoke from the several corners of the room.

He walked in front the photo frame directly above the bed, he sniffed and the faint burnt smell was not difficult to capture.

In the control room.

Zhou Zihao with the phone still in his hand was bewildered, his squinting eyes were actually opened.

He didn't know what Jiang Chen just did that short circuited all the monitors in the room.

"Interesting," he muttered to himself as he looked at the four blacked out screens.

...

There was no hatred without cause nor was there any goodness without reason. Slap his underlings a few times for a new friend? This sorry excuse for friendship was pure bullsh*t.

There was no deep hatred running between them, but he put on a show of asking for forgiveness, and then bring Fang Yuanyuan to his room with the recorded conversation. It was if he is trying to provoke the hatred.

From beginning to end, Zhou Zihao didn't ask him anything but did so much.

When Jiang Chen saw the design of the room that was meant to incite him into committing a crime, he suddenly understood.

In Zhou Zihao's plot, at this time, he would have been furiously ripping her clothes apart and unleashing his anger to humiliate her in the most torturous way possible. But in that case, what was there to gain for Zhou Zihao?

To record these "atrocities" and then use them would be the best way to maximize the gain.

If he could be ruthless to one of his own, then there was no reason he would be gentle to an outsider.

Jiang Chen ignored the surprised look on Fang Yuanyuan's face and once again pulled out his phone. He needed to confirm if Wang

Zhiyong knew about this.

"Hello, Brother Yong."

"What, Brother Chen. Hehe, don't tell me you're done already." There was woman's voice on his side; it seemed to have been more than one.

"The Brother Zhou you introduced me is a bit of a bore, or does he have a fetish for peeping at other's privacy?" Jiang Chen's voice was full of other meanings.

The other side of line paused for a moment.

"Sorry, I'll give you a response to this. I didn't expect Zihao to be this ruthless. He wanted to meet you and asked me to make an introduction. I thought there would be opportunities for you guy to cooperate. so—"

"It's okay, I just wanted to confirm. Okay, I'll head back first." After this turn of event, Jiang Chen didn't want to stay here any longer.

After hanging up, Jiang Chen glanced at Fang Yuanyuan and burst out laughing.

He ripped off the tape on her mouth, disregarded her cry of pain and gazed into her frightened eyes.

"I really don't understand your mentality. Because you're jealous that you're giving me trouble? Or do you think that I've done you wrong? Look at you now."

Although the tape was ripped off, Fang Yuanyuan could not let a word, she looked at Jiang Chen, curled back looking horrified.

Looking at her cowering look, Jiang Chen did not know why he thought it was amusing.

"This is so ironic. Who knows why I got so blinded that I thought I had loved you for a moment."

Jiang Chen shook his head and walked towards the door.

"Don't go!" Seeing Jiang Chen was about to leave, Fang Yuanyuan was nervous.

Jiang Chen stopped and turned around. He didn't expect Fang Yuanyuan to stop him. He gazed at her with an odd look.

Fang Yuanyuan didn't dare to look at him in the eyes, she mumbled, "I..."

"If you have something to say, spill it now," Jiang Chen interrupted impatiently.

Jiang Chen's apathy made her feel humiliated and wronged. After hesitating for a moment, she spoke while sobbing.

When Jiang Chen heard that if she didn't make him happy, she would be thrown into the Huangpu River as bait, he laughed.

"That means you're begging me to fu*k you and then write a positive comment on your butt?"

Hearing this, Fang Yuanyuan's pale skin swelled into a deep red color. She buried her head, no longer speaking.

"Why do you have to make yourself into a sl*t? Want me to fu*k you? I'd feel dirty even with a condom on."

Leaving these words, Jiang Chen turned around and left the room despite the pleading on her face and mercilessly slammed the door shut.

Zhou Zihao's trick was already exposed. Why would it matter if he had sex with her or not?

The sl*t didn't know that she was only a pawn.

-

Wang Zhiyong walked into the control room, Zhou Zihao seemed to be expecting his presence as he stood there waiting quietly.

Without a word, Wang Zhiyong walked up and threw a punch on his face.

The staffs were all shocked and bewildered, and helplessly watched their boss and his friend.

Zhou Zihao touched his nose, saw the blood in his hand and smiled suddenly.

"Brother Yong, your temper hasn't really changed."

Wang Zhiyong dragged him up by the collar, the smiling face was pulled forward.

"You know my temper then you should know what type of person I can't tolerate."

"I do." Zhou Zihao's expression didn't change slightly; his tone was very flat.

"I don't give a sh*t about the things in your family, but I nicely brought my friend for you to meet, and you made me look like this —" Wang Zhiyong stared directly into his squinting eyes.

"Brother Yong, you are the oldest son in the family, right?" Zhou Zihao interrupted him.

Wang Zhiyong paused. He couldn't understand the meaning behind his words.

"Then you don't know how I feel," Zhou Zihao gently removed Wang Zhiyong's hand holding his collar. "If you knew, then your desire to control will not be lower than mine."

"This time, it's my fault, I didn't expect the newly rich Jiang Chen was not as dumb as he looked. But if I was given another chance, I will still make the same choice. If I can't control the pawns in my hand, then what's the point of it?"

"Then let me warn you, you dare to lay your hands on my friend again, even if you are my friend, I can't promise you that you will be able to stay in Wanghai City." Leaving these harsh words, Wang Zhiyong left for the door.

As Zhou Zihao watched Wang Zhiyong retreating back, he gave a noncommittal smile.

"147 officials scandal videos, not you, even your dad would not make me go back to Shangjing. Hehe." He had been playing with fire for a long time ago.

After a moment, he shook his head again.

"This is disappointing. Looks like using military artificial intelligence as a starting point to take down my brother is not realistic. Jiang Chen...forget it, it's best not to anger Wang

Zhiyong further."

-

When he drove back to the villa, it was already 10 in the evening. The lights were out, so Ayesha seemed to be already asleep.

Jiang Chen drove the car into the garage and head straight to the office.

He leaned against the chair, turned on the laptop and checked his email.

The cast is set. Buddy, should we go to the next step? <Robert>

<Attachment: Johnny's Personal Information and Script>

Jiang Chen carefully read through the attachment. He gave it some thought as his fingers typed furiously on the keyboard.

Suddenly, a cup of hot cocoa was gently placed on the table.

Jiang Chen paused and turned around. Ayesha was standing behind him and was affectionately looking at him.

"It's late. Why are you still up?" Jiang Chen stopped what he was doing, looked at her fondly and smiled.

"Well, I just got out of the training chamber." Ayesha put her hands on his shoulder and began massaging.

"Go to sleep first, I still have something to do." Jiang Chen put his hand on top of hers and squeezed her soft, little hands.

Seeing the blushing Ayesha left, Jiang Chen returned to the computer screen.

"Should the plan be expedited?' Jiang Chen murmured as he entered few more words to the text field.

<Ask Nick to prepare. I'll head to Ukraine in October.>

Before that, he needed to head to Apocalypse to acquire some powerful firearms.

Chapter 125: I Can't Control Myself!

Fifth day.

Five days had passed, the morale was very low.

Although the supplies were adequate, there was despondency in everyone's face.

Victory—the price they paid for it was too heavy that it cast a gloom on their victory. Four power armors were destroyed, and the boss was nowhere to be found.

The mutants left a total of 41 bodies that were lying on the field.

Fortunately, the harvest was bountiful.

Four shoulder-launched recoilless rockets along with three reinforced armored truck were seized. Huizhong Mercenaries' bullet production line was a pleasant surprise so Fishbone would be able to produce rifle ammunition on their own without the need to import from 6th Street.

At the top of the laboratory was four anti-aircraft guns that seemed to have been a modified .50 caliber machine gun. These were excellent in typical survival camps as they were considered to be powerful stationary weapons. If they were equipped with armor piercing bullets and could get the first shot, they could easily suppress an armored vehicle.

Huizhong Mercenaries detained more than 20 captives in the basement. It was quite funny when the survivors were kicked off from the mutant's truck. Not only they were not frightened, but rather their face was full of happiness.

It was as though they had been saved.

It was indeed true as they no longer have to worry about being thrown into a pot and being pickled into eunuchs. Many people would rather die than be captured by mutants. If they were taken as a prisoner, there would be at least room for negotiation, wouldn't it? At least they could fight, so they definitely have some value. Although the wasteland was not necessarily short of a population, they absolutely lacked in "experts" like them.

As to whomever they worked for, they couldn't care less.

Although there were a lot of clamors from the survivors to kill off the gang's survivors, Sun Jiao still ordered them to be locked up first. A nutrient supply a day would stave off the hunger and death. As for the nutrient supply, they were naturally raided from their warehouse as Fishbone base didn't have a need for those.

Other than being unpalatable and lacking in nutrition, there were still some benefits to the nutrient supply. The people who ate these concoctions didn't need to defecate for a long time as the metabolic waste would be reduced to its limit. Even if they were imprisoned in the basement, there was no need to worry about the hygiene.

Simply put, the decision to kill or not would have to wait until Jiang Chen came back.

[He will be back...]

Sun Jiao still firmly believed that.

As usual, Sun Jiao sat in the doorway of the tent, behind her was the place where Jiang Chen was last seen. As early as five days ago, she ordered to use the tent to surround the place where Jiang Chen had disappeared into. It was his biggest secret and also Fishbone base's biggest secret so there was absolutely no way she would let anyone find out about it.

She was still holding Sirius in her hands. The laser rifle that had accompanied her for many years was used to slaughter over and over again in these past five days.

And during these five days, she had been thinking about a problem.

If Jiang Chen never came back, what would she do?

"You liar, you said you will take me to the other side." Her eyes looked sorrowful.

Lin Lin was standing not far away from Sun Jiao as the latter

stared blankly ahead above the tent.

Although she was permitted to get off the truck and walk, she was ordered to stay within the 100m radius. If she exceeded that distance, Sun Jiao calmly expressed that she would shoot.

That girl was so scared she almost peed her pants again.

"What on earth are you looking at?" Lin Lin looked up helplessly as she murmured disapprovingly.

At the moment her left eye was black, but her right eye was bloody red.

After five days of communication, she finally reached a tacit understanding with the bug...or Tingting. The body would be controlled by Lin Lin, but the right eye would belong to the bug.

This was also a compromise of sorts. Although Lin Lin was opposed to the idea of a "bug" living in her head and had racked her brains to think of ways to get rid of it, it had never lasted for more than three seconds for her to realize it was an exercise in futility and so she gave up on it. Anyway, there was no harm other than the fact that part of the nutrients would be divided between the two of them every time she ate every day.

<Jiang Chen>

"Hehe, you are talking about him? That scoundrel is now in

trouble, this feels great! He totally deserves it! I don't know...hopefully, he's safe." Although her initial reaction was that of gloating, however, after giving it careful consideration, that guy did not seem so bad.

Lin Lin was conflicted, her head was in turmoil.

She had seen the women in the basement, and she could not believe that the world had fallen into such chaos, nor could she imagine what would have happened if anyone else other than that man had encountered her.

Lin Lin shuddered and wrapped herself around her arms.

"Puke, that's too disgusting. With my stunning look, I will be r*ped a hundred times over then will be turned into a sex toy..."

Well, in addition to narcissism, her delusions and paranoia were also quite problematic.

<Jiang Chen>

Slightly moving her sore neck, Lin Lin grumbled, "Hello, what are you looking at? Other than radiation dust, what else is there in the sky—"

<Jiang Chen>

The mother bug was still transmitting the same thought.

Stunned, Lin Lin touched her heart as she sensed the gradually increasing beat.

Her digital left eye shrunk slightly as she tried to understand the abnormalities in the surrounding area.

Did she see Jiang Chen? But how could that be? There was nothing in there at all.

Suddenly, Lin Lin appeared to have thought of something, her pupil began to dilate and muttered to herself, "That's impossible. Theoretically, that's not possible unless..."

"What are you looking at?" Sun Jiao looked over and frowned, her messy hair obscured her eyes with gloom.

Lin Ling was startled by her gaze and said while trembling, "No, it's not me. It's the bug that wants to look and also that mentioned Jiang Chen's name." She was extremely frightened of Sun Jiao.

In her fragile heart, this "female demon" was more sinister than the "male demon." At least she could detect a trace of sympathy and compassion in his eyes on occasion, but there was none from this woman.

For this woman, other than the things "I like" in this world, it was things "I dislike."

Sun Jiao's eyes flickered for a second and she seemed to have thought of something.

"Ask it, what did it see?"

"Ugh, I have been asking but it seems to only know those two words." Lin Lin smiled wryly.

Sun Jiao silently shifted her line of sight as if losing interest in Lin Ling.

All of a sudden, the tent cover was lifted up.

"Ahem, sorry...I'm late."

The voice Sun Jiao had missed dearly rang by her ear, her pupil began to dilate, and her eyes were instantly covered with a fine mist.

"Hello—what are you doing—"

His chest made in impact with something soft as his back came in contact with the ground with a muffled sound.

Jiang Chen looked at the beauty lying on his chest with a grin.

For these past five days, every morning, he had been trying to start the interdimensional bracelet and finally succeeded this morning. Just like what he had suspected, the travel function was not broken, it was merely overloaded.

As soon as he arrived, before even gaining his balance, he was struck on the ground by this girl.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid—!"

Those soft fists were pounding hard against his chest, Jiang Chen was stunned while looking at the sobbing Sun Jiao.

From the beginning, she had always given him that little devilish feeling. It was the first time seeing her so weak and vulnerable.

"I..." Jiang Chen opened his mouth and wanted to say something.

"Why didn't you come back earlier? Do you how difficult these past few days have been for me—"

Her grievance halted, her crystal eyes were quivering with mist. Jiang Chen hugged her waist and suddenly kissed her on the lips.

From stunned to obedience, Sun Jiao gently closed her eyes as if the grievance of the past few days didn't matter anymore. She hooked her arms around his neck and responded just as passionately.

Due to the enormous softness pressing against his chest, Jiang Chen felt his mouth became parched.

Unaware of his condition, Sun Jiao worried about Jiang Chen's life-and-death condition, did he not miss her too?

He reached out his hand to pull the zipper of her suit.

"No, don't." Sun Jiao was suddenly frightened and shrank back as she awkwardly covered her front and looked away. "I, I didn't shower."

She had been here for five days; although there no scarcity of water, she was not in the mood to take care of her hygiene.

Jiang Chen paused before a smirk appeared on his face. While Sun Jiao's shrieked softly, he got on top of the charming girl.

"I don't mind!"

Jiang Chen roughly tore the zipper on the one-piece combat suit and kissed her neck.

"No." The faint murmur sounded insignificant in this intimate scene.

Sun Jiao with misty eyes caressed Jiang Chen's back, her slender

jade legs rubbed unconsciously with one other.

"Don't you want to listen to my explanation?" Jiang Chen suddenly stopped as he gently bit her earlobe with a smirk.

"No, I want..."

The explanation can be saved for later.

Yes, the day after.

Lin Lin stood awkwardly outside the tent, her pale face was flushed. She could not decide whether to go or not.

Leave? She was afraid that Sun Jiao would really kill her.

Stay? But these shameless people—they, they started doing it!

He was indeed a huge pervert!

Although she didn't know what it felt like, just the thought of it was embarrassing.

Suddenly, her heartbeat began to accelerate making her stunned. Tingting was trying to seize control of her body.

"You're insane! If we go, that savage girl will kill us!"

"What? Can't you beat her? Yes, but I don't want to fight!"

"AHHH! Stop!"

"Waah, I can't control my strength..."

Inside of the tent was filled with romance, outside of the tent...

A beautiful girl who had a 2.5-dimensional anime appearance was desperately using her right hand to hold onto her "uncontrollable" left hand.

She was mumbling nonsensical words that resembled anime lines.

The scene could not be more comical.

Chapter 126: Why not?

The basement door opened.

Jiang Chen watched as the 170cm man dashed into the room, smashed the "cell" door lock open with the gun and hugged his wife crying. The woman's top was exposed and her eyes appeared to be lifeless, but she seemed to be moved by the crying sound as her eyes gradually regained its clarity and tears of sorrow gushed down.

"I really can't bear looking at this," Jiang Chen muttered to himself. His tone was somewhat complicated.

"What are you going to do with the captives?" Sun Jiao glanced at the door imprisoning Zhou Xiaoxia.

"Public execution."

There was no need to hesitate.

For authority, for order.

Jing Chen paused for a moment before continuing, "But before that, I want to meet our old friend."

Upon hearing this, a mischevious smiled appeared on Sun Jiao's face.

Zhou Guoping slumped into prison dejectedly. He was clearly aware of his impending doom but his heart still held a glimmer of hope. He did not care who he was fighting with for he was confident in his intellect. However, when he saw the face from the small window of the cell, his confidence instantly vanished and his face lost all of its blood.

"Oh, remember me?" Jiang Chen asked with a smile. Although he never saw him before, Zhou Guoping must have known him.

Zhou Guopin swallowed hard and slowly nodded.

"Do you remember Hu Lei?"

It had been a while, but he was the first person he killed in this world.

Jiang Chen faintly remembered the feeling of astonishment while staring at the skull that burst open by a gunshot.

"It was you who killed him, wasn't it?" Zhou Guoping smiled, but that smile was uglier than crying.

"That's right, I had no reason to let him go." Jiang Chen's tone was very calm.

"Then why are you wasting time on me?" Zhou Guoping smiled bitterly.

Jiang Chen grinned and settled his hand on the window pane.

"You have two options here. First, tell me everything you know. If it's useful enough, I might consider sparing you. Of course, I'll ask the same question to other people, so you better tell the truth. Second, well, I don't think I need to explain it."

"I choose the first one," he chose without hesitation. He didn't want to die even if he might still do after unraveling everything.

"You better start," Jiang Chen said with a smile.

To save his own life, Zhou Guoping spilled everything he knew. Jiang Chen was able to gather a lot of useful information from his revelations.

The first one was the supply.

Other than the four modified machine guns and the bullet production line they had plundered, there was also a zombie electricity generation in the basement of the laboratory.

It used the organic material of zombies or mutants such as fat or protein as raw material to produce electricity.

It was a great thing since winter was fast approaching. Since Fishbone electricity was powered by solar, they would definitely experience a decrease in energy production. With this zombie electricity generator, they would not need to worry about energy problem anymore.

It was indeed surprising that these bandits were able to hide such good stuff.

In addition to supplies, Jiang Chen also heard some interesting information.

"Those mutated humans came from Jia City and are now stationed at the Seventh Zone. They initially wanted to absorb us but our boss refused it since no one wanted to become a eunuch. The first wave only had five people in them and we successfully killed all of them, but we didn't expect that a big group would show up." Zhou Guoping laughed bitterly. "It was a disaster, our boss' skull got smashed in half."

He was wondering why he didn't see the leader of the Huizhong Mercenaries; looked like he was killed in a crossfire.

"Where is the Seventh Zone?" Jiang Chen frowned. The details of the topography in the apocalypse was quite different to that of the modern world.

Zhou Guoping looked strangely at him.

"Between the highway of Wanghai City and Jia City is a light industrial area where few people reside. Not a lot of zombies but some powerful mutants."

Jiang Chen scratched his chin thoughtfully.

"Do you know what their purpose is in coming to Wanghai City?"

Another bitter smile appeared on Zhou Guoping's face.

"No, there was no room for negotiation between mutated humans and humans, and in my opinion, aside from not eating human flesh, they are basically just mutants who can use guns."

The metaphor did sound strange to Jiang Chen, but after thinking about it, that really seemed to be the case. They could eat anything that humans couldn't eat and they could eat things mutants didn't even dare to eat, even the rotten meat on Roshan. They could enter a nuclear pit with just their body, any vaccine virus would no longer affect them.

Thankfully, these monsters were infertile.

"Didn't you catch a captive?" Zhou Guoping asked warily.

Jiang Chen glanced at him.

"No, you already said they are like mutants. Have you tried catching a Death Claw?"

Zhou Guoping forced a laugh and scratched his nose.

"Boss, do you think my information is enough to exchange for my life?"

Jiang Chen stared at him with a faint smile on his face which made his heart tremble.

To kill or not to kill?

"Although I did cause some minor problem for you, it was only because I was standing from Huizhong Mercenaries' side. Now that Huizhong Mercenaries have been destroyed by you, even if you kill me, I would just be an extra body. You definitely could spare my worthless life. Trust me, my ability won't disappoint you." Seeing the look on Jiang Chen's face, Zhou Guoping carefully opened his mouth.

"Oh? Tell me how are you useful?" Jiang Chen watched him while laughing.

"I know the Songjiang area very well, I have more or less an understanding of most of the smaller survival camps and gathering place for the survivors. My eloquence and scouting ability are also quite impressive, it definitely wouldn't be a waste of your nutrient supply. On top of that, I'm wearing an electronic collar or slavery

chip, which means you won't even need to worry about my loyalty," Zhou Guoping carefully worded his explanation because it had to do with his life while observing the change in Jiang Chen expression.

It would just be an extra body if he killed him, at the very least he could serve as a cannon fodder. Although the bandits must be eliminated, this person seemed to be useful.

After giving it some thoughts, Jiang Chen made the decision and laughed when he saw the apprehension on Zhou Guoping's face.

"Great, you've managed to convince me, so I'll spare your life. I hope you can persuade the others for me."

Upon hearing this, Zhou Guoping was quite ecstatic and immediately knelt on the ground without a semblance of dignity.

"Thank you, glorious leader, for sparing me!"

Jiang Chen looked disdainfully at him and lightly coughed.

"Call me boss, I'm not a bandit."

"Yes, Boss!"

...

After settling his affair with Zhou Guoping, Jiang Chen headed to the door that was imprisoning Chu Nan.

He looked at the man who was no longer crying to get out and knocked on the door.

Hearing the knock on the door, Chun Nan raised his head and a bitter smile appeared on his face when he saw that it was Jiang Chen.

"Could you let me go now?"

"Sure, do you want me to open the door now?" Jiang Chen took out the key and waived it, and asked, "May I ask where you'll be heading next?"

Chu Nan fell into a short silence.

"I don't know but I definitely can't go back to Liuding Town."

Jiang Chen asked in a casual tone, "Would you like to come to my base?"

Hearing this, Chu Nan lifted his head and looked at Jiang Chen a few times.

"Didn't you say you don't need a pilot?"

Jiang Chen shrugged, "I've changed my mind. Although I don't have a plane right now but soon, I'll definitely get one."

Chu Nan suspiciously looked at him, some uncertainties still lingered in his heart.

"I don't even know what kind of organization you belong—"

"The bread you ate last time, three meals a day."

"Deal!" Chu Nan shouted immediately without the least bit of hesitation.

"Aren't you going to consider it?" Jiang Chen burst out laughing.

"Hehe, what is there to consider?" Chu Nan mocked him.

Funny, food every meal. Although Liuding Town provided B-grade nutrient supply for a pilot like him and even if it was grade A, it didn't taste better than the actual food.

Jiang Chen nodded and remarked, "Good, in two days, I'll send you to the Sixth Street to be implanted with the slavery chip, you'll be a member of our Fishbone then."

Finished, Jiang Chen turned round to prepare to leave, but—

"Wait," Chu Nan stopped him suddenly.

"What's the matter?" Jiang Chen turned around and looked at him in bemusement.

"That..." Chu Nan hesitated for a moment, "What are you going to do with those women?"

Those women?

Jiang Chen could not help but ponder on it.

He had almost forgotten about this problem. Thinking about it, these women that had been practically broken by the bandits were extremely tricky to deal with. Take them back? What's the use of keeping these people? Fishbone was not a welfare home.

Leave them here? Let them go? It would be no different than killing them.

"In fact, it would be useful to take them back to the base," Chu Nan proposed when he seemed to have seen his hesitation.

"Oh? What use?" Jiang Chen gave Chu Nan a meaningful then burst out laughing, "You're not looking for a woman to get rid of your virginity, are you?"

Chu Nan was frozen for a second before he quickly reacted

furiously.

"Fu*k, my name is Chu Nan, I never said I'm a virgin." [Chu Nan is homonym of virgin]

Chu Nan paused for a while before continuing, "If you don't have the chip implant technology, then you guys must be a small new survival base."

Jiang Chen looked at him in surprise, that analysis was reasonable.

"Yes, so?" Jiang Chen asked noncommittally.

"In the wasteland, the survivability of male is far stronger than female. So it's easy to imagine the ratio. I don't know about Sixth Street, but there are a lot of bachelors in Liuding Town," Chu Nans said seriously.

"Like you?" Jiang Chen laughed.

"That's right," Chu Nan nodded his head without avoiding the question then continued, "In Liuding Town, they run an official brothel to help survivors alleviate their stress and meet their physiological needs. It would not only decrease the possibility of crime, but it would also increase camp stability."

"Is that right? Everyone in my Fishbone base is implanted with slavery chip, do you think I need to worry about stability issues?"

Jiang Chen asked him.

"I have been implanted with that kind of chips before. Even though the name is a bit different, I think the function is pretty much the same. Let me put it this way, although you can monitor the privacy of everyone and control their life and death, you could not dictate their emotion."

"So?" Jiang Chen processed the information.

"Unless you keep everyone in the state of perpetual hunger so that they don't have spare energy to think about anything else than survival, you can't expect a group of bachelors not to have hope for the next day. It might be okay for a while, but there will definitely be problems in the long run. Especially in a wasteland covered by radiation dust, everyone's mental state is nowhere good to begin in," Chu Nan laid out the facts bluntly.

Mental state? Jiang Chen had not considered this point. He seemed to have only been paying attention to his own mental state.

For example, when he first went back to the modern world from the apocalypse, he immediately went to Sanya to experience a lavish life.

The ghetto in the Sixth Street, those unemployed survivors were in a constant state of hunger so they would not have any desire to "breed"? On the contrary, in Fishbone base, because the hunger and clothing problems had been resolved, they would naturally start thinking of other things?

Perhaps it was precisely like what Chu Nan had said. Unless everyone were perpetually hungry, it would be unrealistic to expect them not to have new desires. Even if Jiang Chen could control their life, he could not control the emotion of everyone. After all, not everyone had the philosophy of a monk.

Although when he bought the refugees (slaves), he deliberately selected those who had a family and controlled the gender ratio. But regardless how hard he tried, the male population far exceeded the female population because of the expansion. Should he let the single guys masturbate with one another? It obviously not going to work

"That is, you think I should open a brothel?" Jiang Chen's expression was a bit peculiar. This was something against his principle.

"Of course, there are other means," Chu Nan paused as he had sensed Jiang Chen's disdain towards that idea then added, "For example, use these people as a "reward" and award them to bachelors who made contributions to the base."

"Reward? I don't approve of this inhumane approach."

"Humane?" You think this is before the war?"

Jiang Chen paused and fell into silence.

"If you really have moral codes you have to follow, you can enact laws to protect the rights of these people. For example, prohibit intentional harming and reward those who can help these people regain their sanity to join the force. In short, since you are the leader, then you can make these rules, the key is on you decide."

After listening to him talking, Jiang Chen looked at him in astonishment.

"I couldn't tell but sounds like you know a lot"

"Hehe, I just read some books whenever I'm bored." Chu Nan scratched his nose.

Just as Jiang Chen was about to leave, he abruptly halted and casually asked, "By the way, do you think these Nth handed people would be wanted?"

Chu Nan was at a loss and looked at him perplexedly.

"Why not?"

Jiang Chen was speechless.

Is this the legendary generation gap?

Chapter 127: Execution and Acceptance

"This here is a group of pests."

"They feed on the flesh and bones of our own kind and make our agony as their nutrients."

Outside of the Fishbone base.

All the zombies had been wiped out and the roof was fraught with the survivors who fought side-by-side with those from Fishbones.

The bandits were kneeling on the ground with a black cloth over their heads, behind them was a group of soldiers armed with guns. Black muzzles were aimed at their head and cold eyes ignored the trembling bodies.

October was approaching and a hint of chilliness was gradually settling in the air. It was at this time that Jiang Chen had put on a windbreaker.

"Killing, looting, plundering, terrorizing, molesting."

He gazed at the eyes of survivors in the crowd and raised his clenched right fist as righteous indignation spewed forth from his mouth.

"Now that they are kneeling in front of us, praying for our forgiveness, and begging for mercy like cowards, do you think we should spare these scums?"

"No!"

Shouts and whistles rang across the entire street. Even the zombies next street turned around and stared at the direction of the Fishbone base.

Jiang Chen closed his eyes, lifted both of his hands and motioned the crowd to quiet down.

The crowd's noise gradually died down and everyone's attention was focused on him.

This feeling was extremely surreal.

He faintly remembered the feeling of being stared at by 30 pairs of anxious eyes in the sewer. The sense of apathy born from absolute control, from knowing that they had the power to control life and death.

But now, he was respected, worshipped, and lauded by a group of people from the bottom of their hearts. He only felt his blood was boiling that even the cold breeze could not be able to cool down.

Jiang Chen shifted his gaze to the row of bandits about to be executed.

"I believe you were well aware that this would happen one day when you pointed your gun at helpless people and abused both children and women."

"No! Ahhh—"

A surprising scene occurred when a kneeling bandit suddenly got up from the ground and dashed to the alley on the side.

BANG!

The desperate fleeing bandit hit the ground and left a frightening, bloody hole on his back.

Jiang Chen shoved his gun back into his pocket when the smoke from the gun had dissipated.

The survivors only saw a series of blurry actions. They couldn't even see Jiang Chen pulling out his gun, let alone the act of shooting. The entire action was so smooth that everyone's face couldn't help but pale.

They did not expect that Fishbone's boss would not only amass a strong force but would also possess an unparalleled individual fighting prowess.

Needless to say, whether it was power or speed of reaction, Jiang

Chen injected with the genetic vaccine was far superior compared to ordinary survivors.

That man's escape just now was arranged beforehand; the rope was not tied down to his legs. It was done only to strengthen his prestige through personal force.

It was only human nature to worship the strong.

Incidentally, this "episode" was Zhou Guoping's original idea.

"Fire!" The cold words were accompanied with white mist and echoed on the cold street.

Gunfire sounded, a group of bodies dropped one-by-one in the pool of blood, officially ending their wicked lives.

Zhao Gang held the rifle in his hand, staring at his enemy who was lying in the pool of blood. Jiang Chen had given him the chance to avenge himself by allowing him to participate in the execution of the bandits. The bandit who was in front of him was the same bastard who led the mercenaries to raid his family, kill his son, and capture and violate his wife.

Seeing that the tumor that disrupted the region for so long was finally eradicated, the survivors cheered and raised their rifle celebrating.

Jiang Chen enjoyed the cheers of the crowd as he continued to

order formalin to be sprayed on these bodies to be hung at several major intersections in Qingpu to deter those who dared to commit wicked acts.

Since then, Qingpu bore Fishbone's seal on the map. It was called the "seal of the order."

-

After dealing with the bandits' affairs, Jiang Chen was preparing to go back to the mansion when he saw a man kneeling in front of him.

"What are you—" Jiang Chen paused to ask.

"I have nowhere to go. You helped me get my revenge, so my life is yours."

Zhao Gang was on his knees with his head lowered, the rifle was propped up on the ground.

"Don't you have a wife? Stand up first."

"That's exactly the case. We have nowhere to go. Please take us in. I am willing to sell my life to you, even if you want me to die, I, Zhao Gang, will not hesitate," he said in a deep voice. The resolute man did get up and remained kneeling on the ground.

[Nowhere to go?]

Jiang Chen had a sudden realization.

Winter was coming. Their home had been raided clean, and even if they returned to that empty hut, they would not last through the winter.

"Please!" Zhao Gang buried his head even lower.

Jiang Chen eyes narrowed slightly and sighed.

"Call me boss from now on."

Finished, he went past Zhao Gang and went to the base.

Zhao Gang was frozen for a moment before an ecstatic expression appeared on his face. He lifted his head and gratefully looked at Jiang Chen's back.

In the end, Jiang Chen was still moved with compassion.

He headed toward Cheng Weiguo who was out patrolling with a rifle, patted his shoulder and pointed at Zhao Gang's direction.

"Arrange a place for him to live outside the wall. Tomorrow, take the other two along to the Sixth Street for surgery." The other two

were obviously Zhuo Guoping and Chu Nan and surgery referred to a slavery chip implant.

"Yes!" Cheng Weiguo saluted.

Jiang Chen nodded with satisfaction then walked inside the base. There were many things waiting for him to be dealt with.

Cheng Weiguo watched his boss leave, swung the rifle behind his back, and walked towards Zhao Gang.

"Get up, buddy." Cheng Weiguo put his right hand to drag him up.

"You'll have to stay outside of the wall for the night. Tomorrow there will be someone taking you to the Sixth Street for a chip implant, then you and your wife will receive a comfortable room and become part us."

Zhao Gang hesitated for a moment.

"Must everyone be implanted with a slavery chip?"

Cheng Weiguo seemed to see through his hesitation. He smiled and then pulled out a cigarette from his pocket.

"Want one?" This was one of the benefits of the Fishbone base.

He hesitantly took the cigarette. Cheng Weiguo grabbed the lighter and lit one for himself. The two then began to smoke in front of the gate.

"I was hesitant like you in the past. I was only a refugee at the time, and when I was forcefully implanted with slavery chip and got sold to some unknown force in the Sixth Street, my heart was full of fear."

"I don't really care about my life, but I don't understand why my wife would need a slavery chip," Zhao Gang muttered and slowly took a deep inhale.

He could accept his wife being humiliated by bandits because it was his own incompetence that caused it, but he could not accept his wife becoming someone else's slave, even if he was willing to sell his life to Fishbone base.

Cheng Weiguo suddenly laughed upon hearing this. He looked confusedly at Cheng Weiguo, not knowing why he laughed.

"I was like you before, the feeling of my own wife being implanted with slavery chip sure did not feel good. But you are overthinking, the boss is a good person. He never treated us like slaves. My wife is now the cook in the base. He didn't wrong us just because he controlled our lives."

"Looks like you truly respect him." he looked at Cheng Weiguo in surprise.

"That's right, I was only a refugee on the verge of death before, and now I am the militia leader of Fishbone in charge of the wall defense. He does not only staves off our hunger but also gives us dignity that we never even think of dreaming. He truly deserves respect. Even if I don't have this thing in my head, I will still swear my allegiance to him.

Cheng Weigo threw away the cigarette butt in his hand, patted him on the shoulder and grinned at him.

"Perform well, as long as you prove your worth, our boss will not be cheap with his reward. I can say that in the entire Wanghai City, other than some special survival facilities, you can't find any place happier than here."

He silently doused the butt of his cigarette and nodded at Cheng Weiguo.

"Mhmm."

On the other side, Fishbone soldiers started cleaning the execution ground. The survivors had begun to disperse, and the Fishbone survivors dragged away more than 20 bodies to the side of the road to be sprayed with Formalin.

One body, however, was quietly dragged into the base and carried into a cabin.

Jiang Chen was sitting in that room. The soldier saluted and

stood by the door.

The "dead body" on the ground twitched and raised slowly.

"Ahem, it's tiring to fake death." Zhou Guoping pulled the black bag off his head, heaved a few breaths and exaggeratedly patted his chest.

"Oh? Do you want to try real death then?" Jiang Chen grinned mischievously.

"Hehe, I'll pass on that." Zhou Guoping smiled wryly and obsequiously looked at his new boss.

He had a bulletproof vest on along with a bag of blood under his vest. When Jiang Chen shot him, he fell on the ground faking his own death.

"Tomorrow I'll take you to the Sixth Street to undergo surgery. Until then, you can't take a step out of this room or else..." Jiang Chen stood up from the chair, walked to his side, patted his shoulder, and walked out of the room.

"Watch him." After stopping for a moment at the door, Jiang Chen signaled the soldier on the side.

"Yes!" The soldier saluted.

Then, Jiang Chen returned to the gate.

There were already two tents erected near the door. There was barbed wire set up to block the zombies. The zombies in the area had already been wiped out and the new zombies would take at least a month before they arrive, so this basic fortification was enough to protect the safety of the three people outside of the wall.

Zhao Gang and his wife were setting up their tent, Chu Nan, the bachelor, was dealing in his own tent.

Jiang Chen still had a few things to ask him, so he directly approached him.

"What?" Chu Nan tied the wires together, wiped the sweat from his forehead, and turned around to look at Jiang Chen.

"Just want to ask you something, I remember you telling me before you are here because your plane crashed. Where was it?"

Chu Nan looked at Jiang Chen with an odd look.

"If I tell you the location of the wreckage, will that be considered a significant contribution?"

Jiang Chen was stupefied then laughed.

"Of course, how about a box of canned pure pork?"

Chu Nan licked his lips but shook his head.

"I want that woman."

"Who? If she's in the base, just pursue her yourself." Jiang Chen looked at Chu Nan oddly.

"She's not in the base. Do you remember Zhou Xiaoxia?"

Jiang Chen knitted his eyebrows for a while before finally recalling that name, but the way he was looking at Chu Nan was now even odder.

"You want her?" That RBQ?

"Mhmm." Chu Nan replied tersely, no longer looking in Jiang Chen's direction.

"Do whatever you want," Jiang Chen shrugged. Although he didn't know why Chu Nan would be interested in an RBQ, he had no intention of interfering with his personal hobbies. "But with her mental state, you better not let her out."

"Mhmm, I understand," Chu Nan nodded, "Could you also take her for an implant tomorrow? She had an excellent combat power before, it's better to put some control."

Surprised, Jiang Chen looked at him and nodded.

"Give me the map." Chu Nan reached out his hand.

Jiang Chen took out the computer pen from his pocket and opened the holographic map.

Chu Nan skillfully magnified the map, locked it in a certain area, and pressed on the screen.

"It's right here, if the reinforcement is strong enough, it should still be on the rooftop helipad. Type-51 helicopter is good stuff, there's not a lot even in Liuding."

Because there were only a few survivors near the city center, the helicopter should still be in there.

"The one near Songjiang? I'll send out a search team." He looked at the dot on the map and nodded before putting away the computer pen.

"Remember to bring steel wires and a truck." Chu Nan gave one more tip before he got back to fiddling with the barbed wires.

"Hmmm," Jiang Chen nodded his head.

The three trucks he got from the mutated human could finally be put to good use. If he could somehow fix the helicopter, Fishbone

base would finally acquire their first aerial unit. The helicopter was something that even the Sixth Street had always dreamed of. With a machine gun, it could be an offensive helicopter and it could carry missiles as well. In any case, there were not many forces with superior high altitude area defense capability. He could modify the helicopter however he wanted, mobility wouldn't even need to be considered.

In short, he must get his hands on this thing as it was simply a humungous killing device!

After leaving Chu Nan, he immediately found Cheng Weiguo to order him to immediately take 15 people and a truck to get the helicopter back. Bearing in consideration the height of the helicopter, he also looked for a construction team and sent for another 10-person engineering team to accompany them.

After dealing with all of these things, he returned to the base once again.

Chapter 128: Lin Lin's Lab

With the return of the expedition, Fishbone Base had resumed its former liveliness.

The construction of the base was back on track, the construction team began moving batches and batches of construction supplies outside of the wall and started to implement the expansion work as originally planned.

The women rescued from Huizhong Mercenaries base were placed in an empty apartment building. Jiang Chen assigned five nurses to take care of them and help them regain their sanity. At the same time, the survivors of the base could now utilize the point system to take the person they like home.

In principle, Fishbone encouraged "adoption" as a means for them to take responsibility and to help their partner to return to normal. Women who could successfully join their workforce would be rewarded with points.

The trading posts in front of the gate reopened after the zombie waves had ended. It was believed that after this incident, there would be an endless stream of survivors that would come and trade here, and the relationship between the Fishbone base and nearby survivor groups would be strengthened further.

The bullet production line and Hummingbird UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) production line were housed in a metal warehouse and the two military production lines could be put into production

after a simple maintenance. So Fishbone base welcomed its first military factory and though the production efficiency was not high, it was undoubtedly a good start.

After ordering Lu Huasheng to construct a building in the newly developed area as the new site for the military factory, Jiang Chen walked to the direction of the mansion.

The UAV terminal could be manufactured from recycled electronic parts and since Yao Yao was the expert in this area, completing it should not be a problem for her. If she could create a drone system, the base defense and detection capabilities would rise to another level.

But the moment he opened the door, he was astounded.

"Do you know who I am?" Lin Lin with her arms akimbo and raised her head confidently.

"You, you are?" Yao Yao swallowed a mouthful, shrunk her tiny head a little and carefully asked.

"Me? I am the noble, perfect embodiment of science and technology—digitalized human!" Lin Lin smiled arrogantly. She was very pleased with the frightened look on Yao Yao's face.

At the moment, Lin Lin's mood was ecstatic that there was only one thought in her mind! The feeling of picking on the weak felt so wonderful. Hahaha!

However, that elated feeling didn't last for long because she found Jiang Chen standing in the doorway and was looking at her with a faint smile.

Lin Lin's mouth twitched stiffly and her arrogant expression remained frozen on her face.

After discovering Jiang Chen, as though Yao Yao had found her savior, she quickly fled behind his back and pouted her mouth looking like she was wronged.

"Digitalized human? So what?" Jiang Chen smiled and stared at the beautiful girl with silver and white hair.

"I, I..." Lin Lin's mouth started quivering as she recalled the fear for this "devil."

"Where is Sun Jiao?" He turned around and rubbed Yao Yao's head indulgently.

"Sister Sun Jiao was taking a shower," Yao Yao said quietly.

Then, she looked at Lin Lin's direction and with a tone full of grievance, continued, "Sister Sun Jiao asked me to find her a room but as soon as Sister Sun Jiao left, she, she..."

"You bullied my Yao Yao?"

This was intolerable! Especially seeing the timid look like that of a little animal on Yao Yao's face, Jiang Chen's protective tendencies suddenly burst forth.

"What, what are you going to do?" Lin Lin was trembling and began to retreat back.

Her silvery hair quivered, her white was filled with fear. Despite her unearthly beauty, her bad character would only arouse human's sadistic desire and not their protective instincts.

Almost unhesitatingly, Jiang Chen took out his EP and then pressed a few keys.

A faint static sound emitted from Yao Yao's neck and the electronic collar opened.

Without saying a word, he seized Yao Yao's collar, approached Lin Lin with a leer, ignored her resistance from her flailing fists, and put the collar around her neck.

Yao Yao touched her neck with an aggrieved expression. That was the one thing connecting her and Brother Jiang Chen, but it got taken away by this strange woman.

The more she thought about it, the sadder she got.

Her big adorable eyes began to get watery.

"No, it's too dangerous. I had always wanted to take it off for a long time. How about giving you a new gift later?" When Jiang Chen saw her expression and hurriedly appeased her.

"Hello! If it is dangerous, why did you put it on me?" Lin Lin protested.

"Who cares about you?" Jiang Chen turned around and gave her a ferocious glare making Lin Lin shrank back in fear again.

Yao Yao looked back and forth between the two of them feeling wronged, her tiny mouth pouted again.

She had a bad feeling about this. It felt like there were more and more opponents.

...

After forcing the unruly Lin Lin to "stay put," Jiang Chen took her to the first floor of the study.

It was called a study but there was no book to be found here anymore. The bookshelves were disposed to the backyard as waste, and the room was now filled with experimental apparatus taken from Lin Lin's shelter.

"Ahhh! How dare you treat my babies this way." Lin Lin tearfully run and touched her precious instruments.

"This is your room from now on. Clean it up yourself." Jiang Chen said bluntly with a wicked grin.

He swore he had always been a nice person.

But for some reason, Lin Lin seemed to be born with "please bully me" BUFF; her favorite was her over-the-top "provocation."

Lin Lin fiercely glared at him before correctly placing the equipment upside down on the ground.

"Oh, so that's how it is. I thought that side was the bottom."

"Stupid," Lin Lin cursed inaudibly and was no longer looking at him.

"The mutated human and Death Claw body are in the freezer. Your current mission is to dissect them. I want to know exactly what the x2 virus is and what particular effects it would bring to mutants and also the body stats data of mutated human. That shouldn't be too hard for you, right?"

When Lin Lin heard this, she haughtily cocked her head, long silver hair flailed neatly to the side, "Why would I help you—"

"If you don't need to eat, you don't really need to help me," Jiang Chen interrupted her words with a bright smile.

"You, you..." Lin Lin instantly looked like she was severely wronged, but aside from making Jiang Chen feel pleased, there was not the slightest sense of guilt.

[Who told you to have such a foul temper!]

"Your task has already been given to you, so if there's nothing else, I am going to head out now. By the way, you better be nice to Yao Yao because she is in charge of your food." Jiang Chen laughed and walked towards the door.

"Hold on!" Lin Lin hurriedly stopped him.

"What? If you're going to protest, then it's rejected," Jiang Chen turned to look at her and said rudely.

"Where is my bedroom? Just to be clear, I want the best room on the top floor with its own bathroom and facing the south..." Lin Lin was reserved at first but started to get carried away the more she went on. Her onyx eyes were flashing with rays of expectation.

But Jiang Chen was just silently staring at her with an expression that couldn't be more confused.

As though sensing that she was just talking to herself, Lin Lin cautiously looked at Jiang Chen and finally started to accept the

reality that she had to yield to him.

Lin Lin thought, [A wise man does not fight when the odds are against him! As a beauty, I will submit for now, just wait until...]

Just that she didn't know when would that time come.

"Is that okay?" she asked tentatively.

Jiang Chen was silent for a long time then suddenly asked a nonsensical question.

"Does a digitalized human need to sleep?"

"Of course! I am not a robot." Lin Lin almost cried in devastation.

After a brief Wiki, Jiang Chen finally understood what kind of existence she was.

To put it in simply, she was just an ordinary person before, but because of congenital disease, 40% of her body's tissues were forcibly replaced with electronics. Her brain was installed with nano components that could connect to her nerve endings, which allowed her brain to operate at computer level processing speed. The artificial stomach allowed her to digest food at two times the efficiency compared to ordinary people, and which could also convert some of the energies into electrical energy storage.

And as far as eating and sleeping needs went, there was no obvious difference between her and ordinary people.

"So, you're not a robot," Jiang Chen stated while he examined Lin Lin from top to bottom. Because he saw a robot at the Sixth Street before, his previous perception made him think that she was a robot. "I assumed you are made out of silicone."

"You are made out of silicone!" Lin Lin gave him a fierce glare, but when she suddenly remembered she still had things to ask of him, her tone immediately softened and used a frail tone, "That, the room..."

"Room? It's right here, isn't it?" Jiang Chen's expression looked odd.

"What?! Here? You want me to sleep with a bunch of lab equipment?" Lin Lin jumped up and shouted like a squirrel that had its tail stepped on.

"Then, why do you think we got you a big room like this? I'll put a bed here in a bit," Jiang Chen rolled his eyes.

Ignoring Lin Lin's cry of disappointment, Jiang Chen left the room.

The reason why he was bullying her was partly because he wanted to do it from the bottom of his heart; on the other hand, he needed to discipline this girl.

There was a spare room in the mansion, but her attitude was beyond abominable. If he were a bit nicer, he was afraid that she would be more unreasonable beyond measure.

It would be unwise to spoil her when he must teach her a lesson.

...

When Jiang Chen entered the kitchen he found Yao Yao who was cooking dinner.

Yao Yao was wearing a pink apron and her right hand was holding a long spoon while intently staring at the pot of stew. The cherry-like mouth was softly humming and the tender face was filled with a happy smile.

[Ahhh, she is just too cute!]

Jiang Chen unconsciously covered his nose despite not getting a nosebleed.

As if hearing the sound in the doorway, Yao Yao's little ears moved adorably as she turned around to look at the door.

"Hmm, Has Brother been very busy? Just wait for a little while, the meal is almost done." After seeing it was Jiang Chen, Yao Yao's face turned slightly red, then she turned around and continued to

focus on the pot of stew.

"Ahem, I'm done. Also, sorry to trouble you but can you cook one more portion in the future?" Jiang Chen walked to her and rubbed her head like a small pet.

"Mhmm! I already cooked one more portion—" Yao Yao was comfortably enjoying the feeling of the big hand rubbing her head.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but smile.

[Sure enough, Yao Yao is a kindhearted girl.]

Even after Lin Lin had bullied her, she was still considerate enough to include Lin Lin's food.

"Oh, what kind of gift do you want?" Although he didn't know why Yao Yao was so insistent on the dangerous electronic collar, he still put it on Lin Lin who definitely "needed it more."

Yao Yao's face felt hot, after a long while, she murmured in a tiny voice, "Could I save it for later?"

"Save it?"

"Yao Yao's birthday is in November so...you give it to me by then?" she buried her head lower and her voice turned even lower.

Birthday?

"Mhmm!" Jiang Chen nodded and smilingly promised.

Chapter 129: Individual Missions

The fancy dinner was comprised of four dishes and soup.

There was Sun Jiao's favorite soy-braised short ribs as well as Jiang Chen's favorite scrambled eggs. With tomato. Lin Lin was throwing a tantrum by refusing to eat. However, that did not even last for three seconds as she was drawn by the intoxicating aroma of the food. With a dejected face, she walked over to the table.

Jiang Chen picked up a piece of tender, juicy meat and bit into it. The delicate texture and delicious taste couldn't be better.

It might be a tad difficult to tell from Sun Jiao's lack of elegance in eating, but just from looking at Lin Lin's stuffed face despite her extremely picky attitude, it showed Yao Yao's superb culinary skills.

"Yao Yao's cooking skill is getting better and better." Stunned by the delicacies, Jiang Chen raised his thumb to praise Yao Yao.

"Hehe," Yao Yao giggled. She embarrassedly lowered her head and her face turned beet red.

"Hey, you should also give me some credit! While you were away, it was me who guided Yao Yao on how to cook the dishes better—" Sun Jiao's mouth didn't stop for a moment as she shoved more food in her mouth.

"You're only responsible for tasting, right?" Jiang Chen ridiculed.

"Hmm, I'll give it 80 points," Lin Lin murmured with a voice that only she could hear then swallowed a mouthful of rice.

After dinner, Jiang Chen and Sun Jiao carried their bowls to the kitchen. Lin Lin had wanted to flee right after eating but was unceremoniously caught by Sun Jiao.

Ignoring Lin Lin who was washing the bowls angrily, Jiang Chen stored the washed bowls in the cupboard and then took Sun Jiao, who had also finished with her task, upstairs.

"Is there any bank near Qingpu?" Jiang Chen asked.

Trading with Ukraine military and mercenaries as well as sending funds to sensitive areas have a high chance of freezing his Swiss bank accounts. In consideration of the safety of his account, Jiang Chen decided to use the most reliable and most primitive payment method—gold.

Therefore, he had to find a way to acquire gold from the apocalypse.

"Bank? Do you need more gold?" Sun Jiao asked curiously.

"Yes," Jiang Chen nodded.

Sun Jiao took out the computer pen and skillfully started the holographic map. "There is a PAC bank in Songjiang which is not too far away from here."

"Take some people with you to run a trip for me tomorrow. I need the gold in this bank vault," Jiang Chen said after pondering for a moment and looking at the location on the map.

"Mhmm," Sun Jiao nodded and smiled winsomely.

"Then, I'll be counting on you." Jiang Chen smiled and was about to turn around to discuss with Yao Yao about the UAVs.

But then he realized that his clothes were being pulled.

Sun Jiao pouted and whispered near his ear, "I took a shower in the afternoon."

Jiang Chen suddenly burst out laughing.

"What are you laughing at?" Sun Jiao was displeased and gave him a light punch on the chest.

"Nothing, I just thought you're adorable." He reached out and caressed her silky, black hair.

"Cute? I am the queen." Sun Jiao straightened her back and rolled her eyes at him.

Sun Jiao evaded his gaze and was suddenly feeling embarrassed. She then forced herself to remain calm. "Do you want to?"

Jiang Chen naturally understood what she meant, but then he shook his head.

Sun Jiao was stunned, her hands were on her hips with a displeased countenance. "Why?"

"Because we need to be peaceful and loving. When the immortals fight, the mortals suffer," Jiang Chen said helplessly.

....

"I still have something I need to talk to Yao Yao about. Wait for me in the room tonight." Jiang Chen grinned wickedly and gently touched Sun Jiao's face.

"Something? It's not what I'm thinking of, right?" Sun Jiao looked suspiciously at him.

"Cough, no, you're overthinking. It's about the drones." Jiang Chen coughed embarrassedly.

-

Sun Jiao pouted and suddenly kissed Jiang Chen on the face,

before jumping aside. "Well, that's all good. You're only allowed to eat Yao Yao only after this Miss has been fed."

Jiang Chen rolled his eyes at the naughty girl then turned around to head toward to Yao Yao's room.

-

The door was open, Yao Yao was sitting in front of the table fiddling with the electronic parts.

There was a faint shampoo scent in the room. Yao Yao's hair was wet and appeared as though she had just taken a shower. She wore lovely bear pajamas, and a pair of smooth jade-like legs dangling in the stool was swinging happily.

Standing at the door, Jiang Chen gently knocked on the door.

"Ah, Brother Jiang Chen? What can I do for you?"

When she turned around and realized it was Jiang Chen, a soft smile immediately blossomed on her face.

"Mhmm, I have a favor to ask of you." He stepped forward and rubbed Yao Yao's head indulgently as usual.

Yao Yao looked baffled, her huge eyes were intently staring at him.

He took out the remains of the Hummingbird drone that he brought from the underground shelter.

"Do you think you can design a control terminal like this drone?"

Yao Yao took out the plate-sized drone and carefully examined it on her hand.

"Well, it shouldn't be a big deal with a UAV like this. EP can be used as the control terminal as long as the number will not exceed 10. More than that, EP's processor wouldn't be able to handle it."

Well, not a problem, a table-sized processor would do the trick nicely." Yao Yao clapped her hands and nodded adorably.

"What materials do you need? I'll be going to Sixth Street tomorrow."

"Uhm, there are still plenty of electronic parts in the warehouse, but some of the key components are still missing. How about this, I'll give Brother a list of things that I need tomorrow morning, is that okay?" Yao Yao said earnestly.

"Certainly." Jiang Chen rubbed Yao Yao's small head. "And one more thing, do you know how to design UAV alert system?"

Yao Yao eyes immediately lit up at the mention of drone warning

system, she nodded vigorously.

"Mhmm! I have been recently reading books in this area. Leave it to me." Yao Yao confidently raised her head.

"Then I'll leave it to you."

"Does Brother have any specifics for the UAV alert system?" Yao Yao grabbed a pen and a piece of paper while earnestly waited for Jiang Chen to open his mouth.

Seeing Yao Yao's serious yet adorable expression, Jiang Chen couldn't help but smile.

"My specific requirement is that the 100 UAVs should be able to automatically carry out patrol mission. It should be able to use the terminal to design patrol route. It should be able to avoid obstructions and immediately respond to enemies' attacks. Also, it would be best to add face recognition systems as well as heat source analysis system..."

After passing the details, he then left Yao Yao's room.

Though the moment he stepped out, he always felt there the was some kind of resentment on Yao Yao's face.

Chapter 130: Thriving

The next morning, Jiang Chen personally led a group of five who needed an injection as well as five Fishbone soldiers into Sixth Street.

He chose to go with a team because first, he was curious about any changes Sixth Street had undergone after the crusade and two, for market research purposes.

Now that Sixth Street's purchasing power increased, the goods they traded with them would no longer be limited to food.

Once the initial burst of rapid production settled down, the highly utilized production lines would equip everyone with potent weapons, lowering the demand for firearms because of the market surplus.

An increased hunting ability meant the number of acquired crystals would rise as well. Survivors would even expand the hunting radius and venture into the city center to obtain more crystals.

After food—the most basic necessity—was fulfilled, people with a pocket full of crystals would begin to look for ways to increase their quality of life.

With demand for other goods, numerous small factories would emerge like bamboo sprouts after the rain. Small workshops would gradually expand based on market demand, and a variety of other

products would fill the store shelves. Small talk between friends would change from, "Did you get any nutrient supply today?" to "How many crystals did you get today?"

Order would appear once more on this part of land. Prosperity would return under freedom. But the catalyst behind these changes was a war that lasted a mere few days.

-

"Welcome to Sixth Street, my friend." Zhao Chenwu held a cigar in his mouth as he extended his arms to Jiang Chen from a few paces away.

"Nice to see you again. Did you get a return on the money you invested on me?" Jiang Chen laughed.

"Of course." Zhao Chenwu handed him a cigar. "Delicacy from before the war, ten crystals for one."

He didn't have to think about it; since Jiang Chen stood here, that meant the danger to Fishbone Base was alleviated and the batch of food was transported into Wanghai City.

Jiang Chen took the cigar and lit it up. After being injected with the genetic vaccine, his smoking addiction was now almost gone—but it was hard to refuse the offer.

"Seems like you've made some money?" Jiang Chen laughed.

"That's right, and about to make more." Zhao Chenwu cracked a smile, then warmly placed his hand around Jiang Chen's shoulder. "Let's go. It's pretty cold outside; we'll talk in the car."

The five who needed the injections were taken by Zhao Chenwu's people to the clinic while the accompanying soldiers returned to the base.

He clambered onto Zhao Chenwu's vehicle, and they drove towards the inner circle.

"So, my friend, what wind blows you here?" Zhao Chenwu looked at Jiang Chen with a bright smile.

Orders were normally completed through transmission, and details that needed to be sorted out could be done through an augmented reality conference.

"One, I needed to bring some new people to be injected, and two, to see any progress made and deliver the order." Jiang Chen glanced out of the car and gave the graphene card to Zhao Chenwu.

It was the same wide gate, and through it, the daunting cannon remained unchanged, but the malnourished faces were now full of confidence.

Construction materials lay in emptied spots as construction vehicles busied themselves outside Sixth Street working on what

seemed to be an expansion project. There were barely any people in the ghetto, making it feel quite empty.

Zhao Chenwu could sense Jiang Chen's shock. He smiled while holding the graphene card and pressed the initiate button. He said casually, "These buildings are part of the newly expanded industrial area. The wall needs to be expanded out by several hundred meters, and the ghetto no longer sells people ever since the council pushed out a new regulation to start a buyback of the ghetto refugees."

"Buyback?" Jiang Chen was unfamiliar with this new term.

"Anyone registered in Sixth Street can be repurchased for the price of ten crystals. The repurchased refugees are not permitted to leave Sixth Street, but they'll work at the factory of whoever bought them back for three years before obtaining their freedom."

"So population trade is no longer supported?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows.

"Officially, yes. Refugees are no longer the burden of Sixth Street, but I do recommend that you go to the free market. There are plenty of merchants from other survival camps with slave dealers specialized in that business." Zhao Chenwu scrolled through the list on the graphene card to confirm Jiang Chen's order.

"Five hundred Reaper rifles, twenty Ghost snipers, five hundred bulletproof vests, four boxes of regular grenades, general combat equipment, five 20mm machine guns.... That's a lot. Are you

planning on creating an army?" Zhao Chenwu asked perplexedly.

"Shipping out of the province," Jiang Chen replied concisely.

[It's true that it's being traded to the modern world.]

"Okay, but with quantities like this, let's push the trade date to the tenth. I still need a bit more, so I'll have to make an order to the factory." Zhao Chenwu took out a paper-thin phone from his pocket and pressed a few buttons.

"One thousand jackets, one thousand snow boots, twenty tons of C-type steel, ten tons of Carm tree sap? These are easy—I can get the bulk price." Zhao Chenwu read through the list.

Carm tree sap was obtained from the mutated Carm tree. It was used as the raw material for multiple types of plastics, an industrial material common on the wasteland. Although the polluted soil could not produce any edible crops, plants that survived through natural selection remained, and Sixth Street had a few small tree farms specifically dedicated to producing this tree sap.

Together with the sap and C-type steel, as well as the electronic parts obtained through the survivor groups, most of the components required to manufacture the hummingbird drone would be collected.

"Then I'll leave it to you. The trade date is set for the tenth then.

This batch should be sufficient for three months, so the next trade should be set for the following January?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"No problem." Zhao Chenwu nodded in reply.

The car drove to the inner circle and stopped in front of a restaurant called Lihua. Zhao Chenwu explained that it was his restaurant in the inner circle.

Jiang Chen gladly accepted the invitation for lunch, but when the dishes were brought out, he was shocked.

Curry chicken, potato pork, vinegar cabbage. Three dishes in total, two types of meat and one vegetable.

The problem was not the dishes themselves, but they were all canned food?

Jiang Chen was taken aback at Zhao Chenwu's eagerness to eat.

When comparing the quality of life, the respected council member of Sixth Street ate worse than the modern-day homeless man.

Jiang Chen ate until he was eighty percent full. He sat in a luxuriously renovated restaurant, eating starchy bread and microwaved canned dishes.

It was quite a comical feeling.

Especially since the person sitting across from him was devouring the meal.

After the meal, Zhao Chenwu used a napkin to wipe his mouth before leaning back against the chair with a smile at Jiang Chen. "I do have to praise Fishbone's food. It's delicious."

"Thank you." Jiang Chen smiled.

"Oh, since you're here, I have something you may be interested in." As if he suddenly remembered something, Zhao Chenwu sat upright in his chair and lowered his voice.

"Oh? What is it?" Seeing this, Jiang Chen became solemn as well. This man was part of a group of ten council members. The news he was leaking had to be taken seriously.

Zhao Chenwu smiled mysteriously as he dropped a bomb on Jiang Chen. "Based on Sixth Street's new proposal, we're about to establish a bank. The feasibility of the proposal is still under debate, but it will most likely happen."

"A bank?" Jiang Chen was stunned.

[Opening a bank in the apocalypse, what is this?]

"The average income is steadily increasing, so it's a necessity for Sixth Street, especially since we have the capability to do so. People can store unused crystals in the bank to acquire an interest, and start-up factories can borrow crystals to invest in the plant. The blood is already flowing—now we just need a heart." Zhao Chenwu laughed confidently as he shot an energetic gaze at Jiang Chen.

In the future, the introduction of the bank would likely begin a tidal wave of new factories.

After thinking for a moment, Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows. "Not a bad idea, but does it have anything to do with me?"

"Of course." Zhao Chenwu smiled, lowering his voice and continuing, "Don't you want to be a shareholder of this bank?"

It was an interesting way to phrase the question.

Jiang Chen's expression turned strange when he heard Zhao Chenwu. He asked rhetorically, "Don't you want to be?"

[If there is something good like this, you would be kind enough to ask me?]

Guessing at Jiang Chen's thoughts, Zhao Chenwu continued, "Of course, but based on the regulation, the council members' share limit is set at seven percent, each contributing one hundred thousand crystals. The remaining would be sold to the public at a

premium."

"So what you're saying is that your cake has already been divided, so you thought about your old friend, me." Jiang Chen laughed.

"That's right, are you interested?" Zhao Chenwu crossed his fingers as he stared at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen didn't immediately answer, but rather scratched his chin as he thought.

[The ten council members are each limited to 7%. Therefore, their influence is equal to one another. This is to prevent one person from exerting too much influence on the decisions of the group. The reason why Zhao Chenwu leaked the information to me is in the hopes of having me purchase some shares. Because of our alliance, he would obtain more influence in the bank. Since my orientation remains in the "headquarters," I shouldn't care about influence but only bank dividend.]

Considering Sixth Street's recent developments, this bank posed significant meanings, or else Zhao Chenwu wouldn't have become so involved in it.

It was the "heart" that would become the bloodline.

A mischievous smile grew on Jiang Chen's face as he had made a decision.

He realized he was becoming more skilled at politics.

"And the bank's investment criteria is?" Jiang Chen asked stoically.

"Provide the factory, store, developer, mercenaries, and a potential hunting team with loans." Zhao Chenwu replied.

"What about the purchase requirement?"

Zhao Chenwu immediately smiled upon hearing Jiang Chen's question.

He could tell Jiang Chen was tempted.

"One percent of the share is twenty thousand crystals. The purchaser is required to have at least two hundred square meters of fixed assets on Sixth Street. Also, they must be a free person without any chip injections."

Jiang Chen burst out laughing and extended his right hand. "Thank you for the information. I'm very interested. If the proposal passes, let me know."

"Definitely. We share the same interests, don't we?" Zhao Chenwu grasped Jiang Chen's hand and shook it forcefully.

"Of course."

Chapter 131: Rocket?

Coming out of Lihua, Jiang Chen rejected Zhao Chenwu's invitation to stay in Paradise Island Hotel at no expense and walked straight to the Development Bureau.

The inner circle had drastically changed. He remembered a few months ago, when he first came here, the only things that had left an impression on him were the spider tank and the fully-equipped soldiers. Now, however, there were pedestrians in flamboyant clothing.

The radiation dust in the air felt depressing as ever, but a touch of liveliness permeated the entire camp.

Prosperity.

Zhao Chenwu's high-end car was no longer unique. Fewer armored vehicles patrolled the streets now taken up by personal vehicles. Along the busiest street were building expansions here and there.

After displaying his genetic ID to the patrolling soldiers, Jiang Chen entered the hall.

"Hello, sir. Is there anything I can help you with?" a receptionist at the front desk said professionally while twirling a pen.

"I'd like to buy a few plots of land to open... a factory," he said

casually as he flipped through the promotional materials on the desk.

He was obviously not building a factory. It was fine as long as he built a warehouse; the key was to settle the two hundred square meter criteria.

Sixth Street was about to establish the first bank, and thirty percent of the shares would be sold—the cake was too attractive to pass on.

Imagining the scenario, the total number of factories and small production facilities numbered fewer than twenty, but now that the average wealth increased exponentially, how tremendous would the economy boom be? It was no exaggeration to say that twenty would increase by at least five-fold within a year, and establishing a bank would only speed up this process.

How many people would need a loan then? It was a guaranteed return.

"Purchasing assets? Thank you for choosing to invest in Sixth Street. But sir, currently, the land available for development have been sold out. Maybe you could consider purchasing for existing owners."

"Sold out? This fast?" Jiang Chen was shocked.

He expected land development to be attractive, but he didn't

expect the plots to be sold out so quickly.

Jiang Chen frowned slightly, thinking a bit before continuing, "Are there any assets available for sale right now? Anywhere works."

The receptionist was at a loss when she heard his words and gave him a strange look.

"Perhaps. Why don't you go to the market and ask in the consignment exchange?"

" . . . "

-

Bulk items and fixed assets were normally sold on consignment at the exchange. The seller normally provided the sale information while storing the related goods or property within the exchange. A buyer with the intent to purchase would then take the information and discuss a price with the seller in a meeting. Once the transaction was completed, the buyer only needed to bring the crystals to the exchange to walk away with the purchased goods.

Jiang Chen held such a sheet of information in his hands with the words, "Store for sale, price negotiable" written on it.

Jiang Chen paused in front of a building, examining the storefront.

Perhaps to save on electricity, the words "Fake Legs Specialty Store" were redundantly written out on the electronic board in black ink.

There was a layer of dust on the wooden window, and the rusty door made out of scrapped shells looked worn down. He hesitantly raised his hand, and just as he was about to knock, the door was dragged open.

A small square TV abruptly appeared before him, nearly startling Jiang Chen into pulling out his gun. The metal-plated mouth rapidly opened and closed, stuttering in a squeaky electronic voice, "Welcome, valued customer! The shop provides mechanical legs and mechanical prosthetic installations with outstanding services for wastelander who accidentally break their limbs!"

He stared at the robot. Its head and body were connected by a spring, and he began to understand why there were no customers.

With such reception, it would be astonishing if a customer did show up.

He pushed the junk robot aside and stepped into the store.

The room was dimly lit, the faint odor of machine oil was in the air. The wall displayed an array of unknown electronic parts and equipment. There was. However, nobody manning the front.

Jiang Chen scanned the room, calling out, "Ahem, is anyone here?"

No reply.

[No one? Or busy with something else?]

He hesitated briefly before going up the stairs at the back of the store.

The top landing was the attic, and from the open door, he heard mutters and occasional, unsettling explosions.

"Is it a problem with the central processor? No, should be the engine control unit...."

The door and roof were wide open. The room was filled with an odd assortment of equipment, and in the corner was a small telescope beside a full-sensory sky map. In the middle of the room, there was a two-meter-wide space, a cylinder as tall as two people, a pointed head....

"Rocket?!"

The young man who was working with a screwdriver in hand was interrupted by the surprised voice and looked in the direction of the door.

"That's right! It is a rocket!" He threw the screwdriver to the side, rubbed his messy and oily hair, and smiled.

Jiang Chen examined the rocket as tall as two people and burst out laughing.

"Haha, someone finally understands the beauty of my design." The person clearly misunderstood, his expression excited as he opened his arms towards Jiang Chen.

He smoothly avoided the hug from a man who obviously hadn't showered in a few days. Jiang Chen cleared his throat.

"The purpose of my trip is—"

"Investment right? I know."

"No, you seemed to have mis—"

"Shh!" The man suddenly gestured for silence. With a mysterious expression, he waved at Jiang Chen. "Let me take you to see something fun."

The man quickly sauntered to the corner of the room.

Jiang Chen gave the man a strange look but eventually followed after a moment's hesitation.

"Power system normal, hydraulic balance normal, fuel normal...." he muttered abstrusely as he typed rapidly on the silica-gel touch board. His eyes were filled with a passionate light.

Jiang Chen stood behind him and examined the sophisticated monitors.

"You are—"

"Ignite!" The excited roar startled Jiang Chen and interrupted his question.

The hand slapped onto a red button.

Boom—!

The fire erupted from the middle of the room, the scorching flames burning against the base made of unknown metal. The floor began to shake violently, and the window panes screeched. Gusts battered at them, and Jiang Chen had to cover his face from the rapid air flow. Between his fingers, his astonished expression could be seen.

"What the fu*k, what the plane are you doing—?" [similar to "what the heck you are doing?"]

"It's a rocket! Space, here I come! Haha, launch!" Against the violent airflow, the man struggled to maintain his balance. He placed his hand over the trigger and pushed it to the top.

The air pressure increased explosively, pressing the man immediately to the ground. Jiang Chen, with his strong body condition, barely managed to remain on his feet. Just as he was about to fall, he activated the nitrogen armor on his right arm.

The nitrogen armor burst out and expanded from his right arm. The special field created by the nitrogen created a decompression zone that deflected the air flow.

The force was immediately canceled out.

"Thanks, buddy." The young man barely managed to hold onto his body as he smiled awkwardly.

Jiang Chen deactivated the nitrogen armor and glanced at the shadow already high in the sky. He threw a dirty look at the young man.

"Are you stupid? Firing a rocket from the room?" What shocked him, even more, was that future technology allowed rockets to be launched from indoors. How advanced were the materials and fuel technology?

The man gave a forced laugh as he rubbed at his messy hair.

"It's okay, Sixth Street doesn't prohibit shooting things into the air...."

" . . . " Jiang Chen was speechless.

Patting at his mussed clothes, the man cleared his throat and extended his right hand.

"Jiang Lin, owner of Sixth Street's Fake Leg Specialty Store."

After a brief pause, Jiang Chen shook hands with him and then looked at him strangely.

"Fake leg? Can you tell me how fake legs are connected to rockets?"

Jiang Lin smiled, slightly embarrassed. "The fake legs store was opened by my dad."

"And now?" Although he asked, Jiang Chen had already guessed what happened.

The son didn't continue his father's business, putting it aside to begin working on rockets?

"I'm not very good at that job." He shrugged, appearing forlorn, but then he waved his hand at Jiang Chen with renewed interest. "Let me show you something cool."

Jiang Lin left Jiang Chen again and hastily walked to the other side of the room. At a loss, Jiang Chen let out a defeated sigh

before following.

"Based on the program settings, my Explorer 8 with the highest speed in the universe entered the orbit. Look!"

Jiang Lin's fingers pressed a few buttons on the touch board. Vibrant lights from the cylindrical image formation device began to interweave, creating a magnificent visual image.

"This, this is our planet." Jiang Lin spread his arms with a grin and hugged the imaginary visuals. He then turned around to Jiang Chen with proudly raised eyebrows.

Jiang Chen's pupils contracted as he shook in disbelief.

"Wow, this is fu*king amazing...."

Blue, and yellow.

It was his first time observing this land. Other than the colors, it was no different from the other world.

The colors belonged to the ocean, and the clouds that were supposed to be white was instead mixed in with an unhealthy shade—this was the radiation dust, chemical dust, as well as industrial pollutants. Towards the northwest, the soil was dark green, supposedly belonging to a type of mutated plant. He remembered Sun Jiao mentioning before that there was an alliance to the north. On the south, the daunting, pitch black belonged to

scorched earth. Because the rocket was close to the orbiting path and synchronized with the earth's orbit, it could only view the areas in Asia, but the situation was likely no better on the other side of the earth.

"From multiple perspectives, this planet is not suitable for human inhabitants." Despite the dark words, Jiang Lin's voice was calm.

He then pressed a few more times on the touch board, causing the screen's perspective to suddenly change.

"This is?" Jiang Chen shook himself out of his astonishment and stared at the belt of debris on the full-sensory map.

"Space junk around the orbit that formed a belt close to earth. The Third World War was not only fought on the surface." Jiang Lin smiled, then enlarged the image from Explorer 8.

"Most of the debris comes from sky-based weapons, space stations, satellites, as well as orbit attack ships and anti-satellite missiles. Part of the debris is also from the moon facility that was sent near the earth's orbit from the force of the explosion."

[Sky-based weapons? Such as God's Cane.]

He suddenly recalled the diary he had read before.

Observing the chunks of metal debris, his expression held shock.

But not because of the severity of the war.

Chapter 132: Sorry, I am a Businessman

Not because of the severity of the war.

But...

Because of the money!

Any piece of debris out there was hundreds of years ahead of the modern day world's space technology! If he sold it.... Actually, it would likely be difficult to sell.

Realizing this, Jiang Chen forced a smile. Just as he was about to give up the idea of digging for gold in space, he changed his mind. He thought, while it would be difficult to sell, what if he used it for himself? Once he acquired the island, he would be able to use his country's name to release a satellite—and that would be interesting.

"That's about it." Jiang Lin abruptly sighed, and the full hologram faded away.

After a pause, Jiang Chen couldn't help asking, "What happened? Didn't your rocket launch successfully?"

Jiang Lin shrugged and looked at Jiang Chen. "It did launch successfully, but the nearby orbit is filled with magnetic pulses. You could say that it's nearly impossible to defend against EMP. Just by lasting this long, Explorer 8 has already reached its limit.

Explorer 7 lasted only ten seconds."

"Then what's point of firing this? Increase space debris?" Jiang Chen glanced back at him.

"How could this be pointless? This is valuable data" Seeing his research being devalued, Jiang Lin immediately became displeased. He pressed a few more times on the touch board, releasing an image on the full-sensory screen again, but this time, there was data that Jiang Chen couldn't make heads or tails of.

"Am I allowed to know what this data will be used for?" Jiang Chen looked over the floating green dots with an odd expression.

"Preparation for interstellar travel." Zeal flickered in Jiang Lin's eyes.

Jiang Chen was speechless. "Interstellar travel?"

"That's right. In 2176, the United Nations sent out six immigration ships into space, the nearest destination being Capelar B in Alpha Centauri, thirteen light years away from Earth."

"So you're telling me that this firework can fly for thirteen light years? And you're prepared to send this firework to find the authority at Capelar B?"

"What firework? This is called Explorer 8! And of course, I'm not going to send this to Capelar B.... But isn't this space exploration?"

Experiment, collect data, make improvements. Now, after countless trials, I'm already here." Jiang Lin confidently pushed another button.

"What is this?" Jiang Chen asked, confused from the diagram filled with data.

"Warp engine concept map. But because of funding problems, it's only fifty percent completed, hehe." Jiang Lin scratched his head, abashed, and looked at Jiang Chen expectantly. "What do you think? The warp engine can achieve speed faster than light, and there will be hibernation chambers to help pass the time on the journey. Are you interested?"

A short silence.

"I'd like to understand something. Does this have anything to do with me buying the property?"

Jiang Lin was unable to process Jiang Chen's meaning as he stared at him blankly. "What?"

Jiang Chen took out the sheet of information and pointed at it.

"Store for sale, price negotiable. I don't think I came in through the wrong door."

Jiang Lin's face immediately flushed, and he mumbled to himself, "No, they can't do this."

He swiftly seized Jiang Chen's hand, as if it was his last chance. "Did you see the sign in front? Interstellar travel! Are you not interested in it? A world free of radiation, a brand-new civilization—as long as you're willing to invest in my project...."

[Sorry, I already have that world.]

"I'm very sorry. I'm a businessman." Jiang Chen shrugged. "I don't see any potential profits from your project. I'm happy living here, and I don't have any plans to fly into space."

"But...."

"No buts. Looks like you're not the owner of this building? Or do you rent a place here?" Jiang Chen sighed.

Abrupt footsteps sounded from downstairs that rapidly approached them.

"Jiang Lin, how many times have I told you, don't build rockets in my... fu*king... house!" a large man in a suit said viciously as he squeezed through the door, wiping his face.

"Ahem, I built a launch base. It won't damage the structure of the building, so your worry is—"

The man didn't seem interested in arguing with him. He rubbed

his temples and said wryly, "I don't care. Pay your two months of rent! Then take your junk and get out of my house!"

Jiang Lin's face immediately paled as he said, "You can't—"

"This... is... my... house!" The meaty man pointed at his nose, the few remaining hairs on his bald head nearly standing on end from fury.

"Calm yourself, Mr. Gu. We'll follow the procedure." A man in a black combat suit, holding an automatic rifle, strolled through the door and looked at Jiang Lin. "Hello, Mr. Jiang. I am the enforcer of Sixth Street. Base on the minimum, you must pay a total of sixty-eight crystals to Mr. Gu Hongkai, or else the enforcement agency has the right to take action. Additionally, because the rental contract has been terminated, please move out within three days. Otherwise, the enforcement agency will have to resort to forceful measures."

"But... but I don't have that much money," Jiang Lin stuttered.

"Sorry, this is the law. Over the next three days, you're prohibited from leaving the house unless you're able to repay the debt." The enforcer shrugged and turned to Gu Hongkai. "Are you pleased with the proceedings?"

"Very pleased." Gu Hongkai didn't dare to get angry at the enforcer. He glared at the pale Jiang Lin, jabbing a finger at his face viciously. "You better get the money ready, or—"

Jiang Chen, who was standing off to the side, suddenly interrupted him and said with some frustration, "Are you the owner of the house?"

Pausing, Gu Hongkai raised his eyebrows at Jiang Chen. "You are?"

"Jiang Chen. If this information belongs to you, we can talk about the price now." Jiang Chen retrieved the information sheet and pointed at it.

Gu Hongkai's eyes lit up immediately, and he smiled widely with sudden energy.

"Mr. Jiang would like to buy the house? Good, good. Let's have a nice chat at the bar."

"Since the problem is solved, I'll take my leave now. Gentlemen, I wish you a good day." The enforcer took out a ticket from his pocket and passed it to Jiang Lin before retreating downstairs.

"No need to go to the bar," Jiang Chen shook his head and refused. "Let's talk here. Give me a price, and if it's reasonable, we can finish the deal now."

The rejected Gu Hongkai did not look the slightest displeased; rather, his smile brightened further. He needed money to buy newly developed land to build a factory, hire hunting teams to head to the industrial area outside of the city to obtain production

equipment, purchase raw materials, put in crystals to start production.... Assets in the market? This store was not his only one, and making rent was not nearly as profitable as opening a factory.

He was unaware of Sixth Street's plan to open a bank, or else he would not have sold this property so cheaply.

A buyer this straightforward was uncommon.

After a moment's hesitation, Gu Hongkai threw out a reasonable price to test the waters.

"Based on Sixth Street's development trajectory, my shop is at the center of the market. Combined with the warehouse in the back and a total area of three hundred square meters, I want a total of six thousand nine hundred crystals."

The rent was thirty-four crystals a month, and with a rent-to-house price ratio hovering around two hundred, it was a reasonable number. After some thought, Jiang Chen nodded. Selling a property in this high-potential area meant that Gu Hongkai needed some quick money.

His eyes flashing, Jiang Chen opened his mouth. "No problem, I'll pay the six thousand nine hundred crystals in one lump sum. But I have one requirement—put his debt under my name."

Gu Hongkai calculated in his mind. Sixty-eight was not a small

amount, but since he needed the money, he couldn't be bothered with it anymore.

Gu Hongkai glanced at Jiang Lin before smiling and turning to Jiang Chen. "Okay, as per Mr. Jiang request, the debt will be transferred to your name."

Jiang Chen nodded, then took the agreement passed over. He carefully scanned a few times before signing his name.

He only needed to go to the exchange to pay the sum in order to obtain the property. Six thousand nine hundred was not a small number, and most ordinary people would be unable to carry around such an amount. With the development of the economy, a bank was almost certainly necessary.

Of course, with his storage dimension, Jiang Chen was an exception.

Seeing Gu Hongkai, his debt owner, leave, Jiang Lin sighed and wiped the sweat off his forehead.

"Thanks, buddy. If not for you, I don't know how I would've taken care of this."

Jiang Chen grabbed the debt ownership in hand and looked at Jiang Lin with a half-smile.

"Thank me? Too early for that."

Jiang Lin perplexedly looked at Jiang Chen.

"The change in debt ownership doesn't mean the debt's been eliminated. Now you owe me sixty-eight crystals."

Jiang Lin's face that had just regained signs of life lost color once more.

"I... I don't have money," he gritted out.

Jiang Chen didn't seem surprised at his response. He shrugged and continued, "You have two choices. One, sell all assets in the store for cash. Considering the popularity of the firearm industry, there's a high demand for raw metal materials. These objects could be sold at junk price, no problem."

Hearing that his goodies would be sold as junk, Jiang Lin immediately roared, "No way! Don't even think about it! My equipment is worth at least ten thousand! This is the door to the new world! Do you know the value of these things? Since you're a merchant, there's no way that you don't!"

Jiang Chen patiently waited for him to finish his spiel before smirking at Jiang Lin, who felt a chill run down his spine. Jiang Chen drawled, "Ten thousand? Without recognition from the market, it's only wishful thinking. I can say my hair is worth billions, but who would buy it? Without a buyer, there's no value. In my opinion, your junk is not even worth thirty crystals.

"Fly to space? How many crystals have to be invested for that? How many years? With this small scale, it would take you one hundred years before you can fly out of the solar system.

"Capelar B? Are you sure the ex-authorities are doing well out there? Are you certain you'll be welcomed?

"I'm sorry, but I'm a businessman."

Word-for-word, Jiang Chen repeated his sentence, and they pierced Jiang Lin's heart like fine needles.

His lips were bitten until they lost all color.

With his research deemed as worthless, his heart was filled with rage, but he forced himself to suppress it.

Jiang Chen's words woke him from his dream.

No one would pay for his dream. Even if this equipment cost him hundreds of crystals, ordered from mercenaries who obtained them from the national planetarium, no one would recognize the value of his work because it was unnecessary.

He began to regret. If he wasn't so stubborn about leaving his father's business to die, if he didn't spend all of his efforts on space exploration, he would not be in this situation where he couldn't

even afford rent.

Jiang Lin breathed in deeply. He said quietly, "Can I hear the second option?"

Finally hearing signs of maturity in that voice, Jiang Chen smiled.

An immature dream was indeed not worth the investment, but a mature scientist was.

"Second option, work for me."

Chapter 133: Your Eyes Should Grow on Your Own Head

"Work for you?" Jiang Lin hesitated as he gave Jiang Chen a perplexed look. "Work in your factory?"

"No." Jiang Chen held up a finger and shook it, staring straight into Jiang Lin's eyes. "Come to my survival camp. I'll invest in your space project, but you'll have to follow my requirements."

Jiang Lin looked suspiciously at Jiang Chen.

"A survival camp? I haven't left Sixth Street that often, but it's not like I don't have a clue about the outside world. Who says your camp isn't a gathering of bandits? What if I become a slave going in?"

Jiang Chen smiled and walked up to Jiang Lin to pat his shoulder.

"Slave? Do you know how much it costs to buy a slave from the ghetto?"

Jiang Lin gulped. "Before the slave trade was halted, including the microchip which costs nineteen crystals, the price for a slave was as high as fifty crystals."

"Then do you think I need to spend sixty-eight crystals to buy

someone who has never done hard labor?" Jiang Chen smiled. "I don't plan on negotiating with you. You only have two options.

"Sell your dream as scraps, and go work at the factory to pay off the remaining crystals. Or sell your dream to me, and I'll provide you with resources and directions. All you need to do is install a chip on your neck."

Listening to Jiang Chen speak, Jiang Lin's inner turmoil could be seen in his eyes, but in the end, he sighed in compromise. Before Jiang Chen's pleased gaze, he opened his mouth to say, "I choose two."

...

Since Jiang Lin had already nodded in agreement, the rest was fairly simple. Jiang Chen arranged for him to pack everything and then sent him to the clinic for injection. On the tenth, when they were to conduct the trade with the Zhao Corporation, Zhao Chenwu would send the people and the goods together.

As for the store's new purpose? Jiang Chen had yet to think of a solution, but he went ahead and hired construction workers to seal the open roof. Since winter was coming, a tent that only shielded from rain did not seem reliable at all.

Overall, the criteria of having a 200-square-meter fixed asset were met for him to join Sixth Street Bank.

The next morning, Jiang Chen took Jiang Lin to the hospital.

After paying a hospital fee of nineteen crystals, Jiang Chen watched as the doctor reached the end of the hallway while he met up with the five people who were just exiting the rehabilitation room.

Due to the chip's installation into the neural network, interference from the electric parts was inevitable. Therefore, after the injection, they were required to spend a few hours in rehabilitation—which they had just clearly finished—before being released from the hospital.

Chu Nan saw Jiang Chen from afar and greeted him. Zhou Guoping had the same simpering smile, and Zhao Gang held his wife in silence. Zhou Xiaoxia's vision seemed to lag, as though she'd been injected with a tranquilizer?

"How are you feeling?"

"Not bad." Chu Nan shrugged. "Try your EP."

A doctor in a white coat walked over and gave a nail-sized memory card to Jiang Chen before beating a hasty retreat to the surgery room.

Holding the memory card in hand, Jiang Chen inserted it into the EP on his wrist. He noticed that while it was loading, Chu Nan's eyes stayed on the loading bar.

"Missing your freedom?" Jiang Chen joked.

Chu Nan smiled, then glanced away.

"What's freedom? From the moment I was born, I fought for one power, and now I changed to another one."

The bar finished loading.

Seeing the words <Slavery chip online> hovering on the screen, Jiang Chen grabbed the memory card and crushed it.

"Freedom is a good thing. Within certain boundaries, I'll grant you enough of it." Jiang Chen smiled at Chu Nan as he pressed buttons on the EP.

Jiang Chen's face surfaced on the screen in a clear image; he was connected to Chu Nan's vision.

Chu Nan rubbed his temple. "Is this a neural injection? Sixth Street's slavery chip is quite intriguing."

"Liuding Town doesn't have this?" Jiang Chen asked casually as he selected the option to end the connection.

"No, we have more opportunity to fight long-distance with few chances to battle on foot. We call it the 'dictator chip'. It emphasizes

communication and remote sensors, but it doesn't seem to be as stable as this one. It's controlled by the central processor on the ship and will grant control to someone's EP only under special permission." Chu Nan moved his limbs and gradually accustomed himself to the feeling.

"What about you guys?" Jiang Chen asked as he surveyed the remaining four people.

Zhou Guoping, with his shiny, bald head, continued his attempts to flatter. "Hehe, very good! I pledge allegiance to the boss."

Zhao Gang's wife was a bit frightened and hid behind Zhao Gang's back. As he comforted her, he said solemnly, "Not bad."

Zhou Xiaoxia, as usual, had the same blank expression.

Some conversations were not meant for a public hearing. After confirming the chips' functionality, Jiang Chen took all five of them to the Fake Legs Specialty Store.

Once they all arrived, Jiang Chen closed the door behind him.

Seeing that the boss had something to say, Zhou Guoping's eyes rolled cleverly before he moved a chair for Jiang Chen to sit on from behind the counter. Chu Nan glanced at him and turned away disdainfully. Their conflict started over a month ago, but now that they worked under the same boss, there was no longer any opportunity to seek revenge.

Zhao Gang held his wife's hand and stood off to the side in silence.

"I've arranged a few things, so listen up and follow." Jiang Chen sat on the chair without caring for appearance.

"Zhao Gang, take your wife back to the base and join the civil army while waiting for further orders."

"I understand."

"Chu Nan, since you're familiar with the helicopter, go purchase whatever's necessary for repairs. Then take her back." Jiang Chen pointed at Zhou Xiaoxia, who had yet to regain consciousness.

"No problem, but I don't have a single crystal on me." Chu Nan opened his palms helplessly.

Under Chu Nan's shocked gaze, Jiang Chen grabbed two hundred crystals from his pocket and threw it at him before clapping his hands.

"Okay, get moving."

The four immediately left, leaving Zhou Guoping at a loss.

Seeing Jiang Chen stay silent, Zhou Guoping stayed true to his

servile character and proactively asked with a simpering smile, "Boss? What about me?"

"I heard that during your time working for the Huizhong Mercenaries, you were stationed in Sixth Street. You must be pretty familiar with the area?" Jiang Chen leaned back, fingers crossed, and smiled decisively at Zhou Guoping.

"Hehe, of course. Boss, what would you like to know?" Zhou Guoping patted his chest confidently.

"Do you know any slave merchants?"

Zhou Guoping immediately nodded and said attentively, "Yes, yes! There is a slave merchant from Su City in Sixth Street. There are also clones from the 071 survival base, but because of production problems, they must be ordered beforehand. The good thing is that they are all original—"

"What are you thinking about? Whether it's original or not," Jiang Chen jokingly cursed, "I'm not planning on doing that."

"Hehe, boss, if you want, you can have some fun in New Ray Hotel. Once you train the newly produced clones a little, they're exactly like sex dolls...." Zhou Guoping smiled lewdly.

"Okay, I'm talking to you about a serious matter," Jiang Chen interrupted with a frown.

"Yes, yes!"

"Contact the slave merchant. The base still needs two hundred people. How much should the price be?"

Zhou Guoping thought for a moment. "If they're ordinary slaves, ten crystals each would be enough. If you're looking at fallout shelter 071's product, then probably twenty crystals. Considering the market at Sixth Street, the population price could double."

"That's fine. Go ahead and contact them. Transportation is difficult during the winter, so put the order in first and ship them here next year. Try to lower the price as much as you can. It's time to test your ability."

Zhou Guoping laughed and smacked his chest with confidence. "Don't worry, Boss! You can count on me."

Once the population business was taken care of, it was now time to discuss the store's purpose.

"What do you think we should open this store for?" Jiang Chen asked as he scanned the decoration in the store.

Zhou Guoping's eyes rolled a bit, and he scratched his head. "That's up to what the boss wants. If it's to make money, then a food store would definitely be the best choice."

Jiang Chen thought for a bit before shaking his head. "Not a food

store. Zhao Chenwu has already taken care of Sixth Street's food business."

Fishbone Base needed an alliance, and therefore it was necessary to give up part of the profit. From now on, Zhao Chenwu was a genuine partner; maintaining the relationship would bring more profit than opening a food store.

It was especially pointless to use this store to make money. Fishbone Base had nothing attractive to Sixth Street beside food.

Other than crystals, Jiang Chen needed more intelligence.

From the information on the bank, he realized the importance of gathering intelligence. If Zhao Chenwu didn't leak the information to him, the opportunity to make more than one hundred thousand crystals would have slipped through his fingers. Since he did not have any agents here, he had to rely on Zhao Chenwu for all events at this location. It was unwise to entrust his eyes to someone else.

As Fishbone grew, he needed to consider more factors.

"I need you to gather intelligence for me here. Record any information you think valuable. You worked for the Huizhong Mercenaries before, so you should be familiar with this type of work."

Zhou Guoping smiled self-assuredly, responding immediately with, "Of course, Boss. I'm great at this sort of thing. When I used

to work for the Huizhong Mercenaries, I spent all day in bars and official purchasing centers, recording all of the fat prey and sending the information back. We could open our own bar. There's nothing better in this world than alcohol to make a person spill the truth."

"Bar?" Jiang Chen paused and looked at him with an odd expression. "There are bars in the Sixth Street?"

There were no crops to produce the alcohol, so how could there be a bar?

"Hehe, it is processed methanol. Just a small quantity is fine."

[Industrial alcohol is drinkable?!]

[What the fu*k, the alcoholics in the apocalypse go pretty far.]

But speaking of this, he forgot that selling alcohol was an excellent way to make money—perhaps even more popular than food.

"I'll leave the bar to you. Get someone to renovate this place, and send me a message when it's done. Don't worry about the alcohol, I'll take care of it."

If the alcoholics smelled the scent of beer, wine, and Baijiu, would they barrel down the door of the bar? The more he thought about it, the brighter his smile became.

Although alcohol was scarce in the apocalypse because of the lack of crops, that was nothing in the modern world! Any store had an abundance of it.

Seeing his boss's delighted mood, Zhou Guoping was also secretly happy. His future depended on Jiang Chen; if Jiang Chen was satisfied, then he would be better off.

"Yes, boss!" Zhou Guoping responded and bowed with a flourish.

Chapter 134: The Bullet Shell Bar

Off to the side of a store was a door, and on it hung a rotten slat of wood. A few crooked words were carved into it with a dagger—The Bullet Shell Bar.

This was the place Zhou Guoping had talked about. According to him, it was an entertainment hub of Sixth Street.

After arranging for Zhou Guoping to handle the renovations, Jiang Chen personally came here to do some market research since he didn't know the tastes of the people. The best way to find out was to personally have a drink or two.

While the renovations weren't the best, there was a surprising number of customers.

Strange individuals covered in large trench coats sat alone at a table near the door, drinking alcohol that stung the nose. A young man with a red headscarf had a cigarette in his mouth and one foot on a chair as he dealt cards. There were lone travelers, bandits, and those of the profession that recently came into popularity—hunters. Women in exposed clothing leaned against the bar under the flickering lights and waited for tonight's prey to take the bait. And among the shadows, a black market merchant hid, selling "harmless" products....

The air in the bar was shrouded, and the noise cluttered the already limited room. This was Jiang Chen's first impression upon stepping into this space.

It was not an illusion that when he took a step onto the dry wooden floor, at least ten pairs of eyes flicked over at him.

Some were friendly, most were not.

After a second's pause, Jiang Chen continued to walk and directly approached the bar counter.

"Are you not going to buy me a drink? Handsome." A woman in heavy makeup leaned against the counter and displayed a charming smile.

Jiang Chen ignored her with a smile and looked beyond the counter at the bartender who was silently wiping a cup.

White shirt, black pants—a relatively clean appearance. But the slight beer belly turned what should have been suave movements into rather comical motions.

"What do you have here?" Jiang Chen sat on the chair and asked casually.

Hearing Jiang Chen's words, the bartender stopped and glanced at Jiang Chen.

"Your first time here?"

"Mhmm."

"Lots of things. Alcohol, Nut Coke, eOrange, Kaka Tea." The chubby bartender resumed wiping the glass cup that had been cleaned countless times.

"Also, hamster milk tea and cockroaches smoothie." A young man whistled and laughed.

"I won't sell those things to newcomers." The bartender kept his head down.

"Looks like I don't have the opportunity to experience those." Jiang Chen shrugged as he joked, then said, "Give me one of each."

The bartender's hands stopped. He turned around to open the fridge and placed odd glass bottles on the counter.

"2, 1, 2, 3. A total of 8 crystals."

Jiang Chen reached into his pockets and took out eight crystals from the storage dimension. He casually slapped it onto the table. His ostentatious moves led to a wave of whistle-blowing and looks of avarice.

The bartender quietly took the crystals and didn't say a word as he continued to work.

He looked over the four bottles of "drink." Jiang Chen's eyebrows twitched. These things looked as suspicious as they could get.

The alcohol seemed relatively normal—should be like Baijiu? The Nut Coke was the oddest; its fluorescence did not seem potable at all. The eOrange was similar to orange juice, and the Kaka Tea was green like seaweed, its cloudy liquid interspersed with questionable fragments.

"These things are drinkable?" Jiang Chen couldn't resist asking.

Howls of laughter erupted from behind him. A giant of a man walked up with a smirk on his face before planting his foot on the chair beside him to roughly ask, "Yo noob. These drinks are too much for you. Why don't you play with us? If you're lucky, one crystal could become ten."

His tone and expression assumed Jiang Chen was already in the bag, and the play he referred to was obviously gambling.

Jiang Chen glanced at him and instead of showing anger, smiled.

"Then why don't we play a game as well?"

As he said this, Jiang Chen didn't allow the man a chance to say yes or no. He slowly withdrew a crystal worth fifty energy crystals from his pocket and waved it in front of the giant who was showing off.

"Two crystals per turn. Guess which hand the crystal's in. If you're right, then it's yours."

The giant was at a loss at Jiang Chen's abrupt actions, but his expression soon became ecstatic. He thought, [This dumba*s. If I guess ten times, regardless of how you trick me, I'm guaranteed to be correct at least once.]

But he wasn't a dunce. If Jiang Chen left after two turns, his crystals would have gone to waste.

"Twenty crystals and I guess ten times." The giant smiled viciously and slammed the crystals onto the table.

The people standing around all gave sympathetic looks at Jiang Chen.

"Unfortunate that he was targeted by Liu Mang."

"Hehe, this noob is really unlucky."

The ones who were gloating were mainly the giant's comrades.

[Liu Mang? That's a good name.] (Liu Mang is homonym for the word thug.)

His lips moved as he muttered in his mind. Jiang Chen didn't seem bothered as he took the twenty crystals on the table.

"No problem. It'd be fine even if you wanted to guess one hundred times." Jiang Chen yawned as he threw the energy crystal into the air with nimble hands.

Liu Mang's vision blurred, and the crystal seemed to disappear from his sight. Upon seeing Jiang Chen's movements, the gloating expressions of the people suddenly twisted while those who were compassionate rejoiced.

It was going to be a good show.

Cold sweat rolled down Liu Mang's forehead. He wasn't able to see where the crystals went. He estimated that the reflex of this person was at least 25. And though he was also injected with the genetic vaccine, it had been the standard E-grade.

"Take a guess." Jiang Chen placed his hands before Liu Mang with a bored expression.

Since he hadn't been able to see it clearly, Liu Mang took a wild guess.

"Right hand."

Jiang Chen laughed.

"Congratulations.... you're wrong."

There was nothing in his right hand.

"You're a fraud!" Liu Mang was immediately unhappy. His eyes bulged, and his companions inched closer with unfriendly expressions. So what if he had the genetic vaccine—who hadn't? Even if it was a lower-quality version, they had an advantage in numbers.

Jiang Chen rolled his eyes and opened his left hand; on his palm was a bright purple crystal.

"There are nine more chances. Are you still going to guess?" He did not seem afraid at all.

Liu Mang was surprised. He originally thought that since Jiang Chen hadn't immediately revealed his left hand, the crystal must have been hidden away, but it was actually in the left hand.

Under everyone's watch, although he had always acted recklessly, he didn't dare to start a fight. After further thought, there were still nine more chances.

Liu Mang signaled his pawns away and let up on his act. He glared at Jiang Chen.

"Yes, start."

A hint of mockery appeared in Jiang Chen's smile as the crystal was thrown into the air again.

He must be joking. Was he the type to use fraud?

The answer was definitely.

No matter which hand Liu Mang chose, the crystal would always appear in the other hand.

The storage dimension was a fraud's holy grail. Jiang Chen imagined that if he went to Macau, all of the legendary gamblers would have to move aside for him.

"Last time. You better be careful." Jiang Chen lazily waved his hands in front of Liu Mang.

Liu Mang's eyes were pure red as they locked on to the two fists. He tried to spot differences in size, but it was futile.

This was the gambler's mindset; they would not stop until they lost every single crystal.

He had already lost the previous twenty crystals, and he immediately put up the last ten that he had.

He only needed to win once to make all of the money back... so close!

But when Jiang Chen opened his hands, he was wrong again.

"That's impossible! A fifty percent probability, how could I not even guess it right once? You're a fraud!" Liu Mang immediately flared up as he cursed and kicked the chair away with his feet with a fighting posture.

Seeing Liu Mang's actions, everyone around exposed looks of disdain.

Anyone could see that Jiang Chen was cheating, but if there was no evidence, why was he trying to act like the big man?

But the reckless Liu Mang didn't care. Instead, he ordered his thugs to surround Jiang Chen.

"Buddy, you dare to cheat me? You think you're tough. Let me tell you, if you don't return the crystals you cheated me out of with both hands and knees on the ground, I'll make sure you don't leave standing up."

Jiang Chen flicked his eyes over at the furious Liu Mang and opened his mouth calmly.

"You lose nine times out of ten in gambling, has no one taught you this before? Also... speaking of this, does the civil force care enough to come here?"

The young man that whistled at Jiang Chen earlier still sat in his original seat. He sipped at his alcohol and laughed without regard to the atmosphere.

"Of course, but the cop is always late."

"That's perfect then." Jiang Chen laughed.

Being ignored, anger shot straight to Liu Mang's head, and he reached for Jiang Chen's collar.

"Fu*k you, I'm speaking to you—"

Boom—!

Without warning, Jiang Chen kicked out. Liu Mang felt like his chest was slammed by a hammer as he flew backward like a kite with its string broken. He slid across a table and directly cannon-balled out the door. The bartender looked at Jiang Chen with shock before placing the glass cup aside and subtly pressing the emergency call button beside the counter. The crowd, seeing the conflict, began to whistle and cheer.

"Fu*k hit that bit*h." Seeing their leader kicked away, the thugs all grabbed weapons to swarm Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen calmly avoided a side swipe as fury immediately activated. He pinched the dagger in front of him and used the suddenly explosive power to drag it aside and stab it into a thug's

shoulder.

"Ahh!" The thug screamed in pain and fell backward.

Jiang Chen didn't stop there. He dragged a thug to him with his right hand clenched over his chest and blocked a few bats from falling on him.

"Haha, amazing."

"Give him the upper chin."

"Use the chair, dumba*s!" The crowd did not shy away from trouble. Sometimes they cheered for Jiang Chen, and sometimes they swore at the thugs for being useless—a group of people couldn't even beat one man.

With all of the banging, the thugs didn't manage to land any hits on Jiang Chen. Instead, the bats hit all of their own people.

Fury deactivated.

Cheering, the crowd celebrated the winner. The woman who tried to strike up a conversation with him earlier gently licked her seductive, red lips with bright eyes, but Jiang Chen continued to ignore her.

He clapped his hands and glanced at the thugs on the floor.

The young man drinking alone beside the counter smiled. "I was waiting for you to lose so that I could get a few drinks out of you."

"Looks like you won't have the chance." Jiang Chen shrugged as he laughed.

"Fu*k, you dare to hit me. I'll beat you to—" Liu Mang limped into the room limping as he cursed. But when he saw the thugs on the ground and the mocking looks on the crowd's faces, his mouth froze.

Meeting Jiang Chen's mischievous grin, he looked at the thugs on the ground again as if he couldn't accept this reality.

"You, do you know who I am?" Once he saw that he couldn't win the fight, Liu Mang began to threaten him with a malevolent stare at Jiang Chen.

"Oh? You are?" Jiang Chen casually picked up the eOrange and took a sip, but the saccharine taste nearly made him throw it back up.

[What, people drink this?]

The crowd was also shocked as they thought, [What, people drink this directly?]

Jiang Chen put the drink back with the same mischievous expression.

"I-I'm close to the Huizhong Mercenaries. Hehe, since you're wandering around in the area, you must know about them." A sneer surfaced on Liu Mang's face as he stared directly into Jiang Chen's eyes. He wanted to see a hint of fear in those pupils.

But he would inevitably be disappointed by Jiang Chen's reaction.

When he heard the name Huizhong Mercenaries, he resisted the urge to laugh.

"Are you close with them?" Jiang Chen looked at him impishly.

"That's right, and if you don't want to lie in a casket the second you step out of Sixth Street, then you better apologize, and—"

"And give you some compensation?" Jiang Chen laughed as he said uncaringly.

Liu Mang paused, finally realizing that this person's reaction was off.

"That's right. If you know any better, then take out the crystals."

Jiang Chen glanced at him and slowly said, "Since you know

them so well, do you have any idea where they are now?"

"They're in the Songjiang area. I'm close to their leader," Liu Mang said cockily.

"No, they're in Qingpu." Jiang Chen shook his finger. "Their bodies are sprayed with formalin and hung up on light posts."

Liu Mang was speechless as he looked at Jiang Chen in disbelief. "What, what nonsense are you spouting. Are you in your right fu*king mind? You better—"

"He's not lying." The young man sitting beside the counter laughed as he pointed his cup in Jiang Chen's direction. "Because he took care of all those dumba*ses."

Chapter 135: I'm from Jia City

The crowd was shocked by these words.

Shock was written all over Liu Mang's face. He did wonder why he hadn't met the Huizhong Mercenaries in so long. Could it be that what he said was....

His shock gradually turned into fear.

"I did hear that the Huizhong Mercenaries offended the wrong force and was wiped out."

"It seemed to be a force from Qingpu."

"Oh I remember! An alcoholic from Qingpu did say this."

Lone travelers on the wasteland naturally had heard some news. For example, Songjiang was suddenly stabilized, and the Huizhong Mercenaries' raid team had abruptly evaporated into thin air. No one would have guessed that this recognized force had been wiped out by the man standing in front of them.

The woman that continued to piercingly gaze at Jiang Chen was even more shocked. If she was tempted in the beginning, now she didn't care about the price anymore....

The greedy gazes from the shadows were now wary. They began

to question how they would have fared against the Huizhong Mercenaries.

"You, th-that's impossible." Liu Mang stared at Jiang Chen as if looking at a ghost. He shivered, unable to properly articulate his words.

Jiang Chen didn't bother with Liu Mang anymore. Instead, he smiled at the young man who was sipping at his drink.

"I've heard that this industrial alcohol is not too good for you."

"It's fine. You can have two bottles as well. People with genetic vaccines have a strong digestive system." The man put down his cup and laughed casually.

"You know who I am?"

"Of course. I came from Jia City for the sole purpose of finding you." The young man shrugged and extended his right hand. "Lin Chaoen, from Jia City's Defenders. Pleased to meet you."

[Defenders? Why don't you call yourself the Avengers?]

"Jiang Chen." With an odd expression, Jiang Chen similarly extended his hand for a handshake, but the caution in his eyes remained.

"Don't look at me like that. I'm a nice person," Lin Chaoen said innocently in response to the look of distrust in his eyes.

Jiang Chen didn't refute him and looked away. He returned to the seat beside the counter and turned to the frightened Liu Mang.

"You're lucky. At least you can choose which brand of formalin you want to use."

When he heard those words, Liu Mang immediately got on his knees.

"Please spare me. I didn't know any better. I—"

"Enough, I've heard too much of the same thing. If you want to live...." Jiang Chen said irritably. He slapped the counter. "These four strange concoctions—you can get the hell out once you finish them."

Liu Mang's face turned green instantly.

"psh, an entire bottle of industrial alcohol. Half of his life would be gone by the time he finishes. What a waste. Why don't you—"

Before Lin Chaoen could finish, a bottle flew in his direction.

He caught the object thrown at him by Jiang Chen and laughed as he poured himself another cup.

"The remaining three bottles, go ahead." Jiang Chen slowly said as he stared at Liu Mang.

The three drinks did not look normal at all. He didn't have the intention to drink it himself. But for market research, as well as curiosity, it was not a bad idea to find his own white rat.

Liu Mang thought about Jiang Chen wiping out the Huizhong Mercenaries and lost all courage to fight back. He bit the bullet as he valiantly walked up, picked up the bottle of Nut Coke, and began to guzzle it.

The crowd blew whistles as the lot of them stared at his pants mockingly.

By the time he finished the entire bottle, Jiang Chen was shocked to discover that this guy's pants had lit up.

That's right, lit up.

"Nut Coke adds a trace amount of a radioactive strontium isotope that makes the pee fluorescent. Damn, a whole bottle in one sitting. This guy's di*k could be a light bulb for an entire day," Lin Chaoen mocked as he took a sip.

"Radioactive element? Is it not harmful to the human body?" Jiang Chen asked as he gave a weird look at the Nut Coke.

"This thing is harmless. They sold it before the war."

Liu Mang picked up the dark green Kaka Tea. His forehead twisted, but he still raised his head with a look of agony and started to chug.

"Kaka Tea has an excessive amount of tea polyphenols as well as other radiation-resistant substances. It doesn't look the best and tastes bitter to the point of stinking, but the radiation resistance effect is quite superb." Just as Lin Chaoen finished speaking, Liu Mang's pants lost all illumination.

After finishing the two bottles, Liu Mang held the last eOrange and looked at Jiang Chen with a troubled expression.

"Why are you looking at me? Drink!" Jiang Chen stared at him.

"Yes, yes!"

Liu Mang grit his teeth as he began drinking from the bottle. As soon as it reached his stomach, however, he fell unconscious to the ground.

"eOrange, concentrated sweetener. The normal way to drink it is to use the cap to pour it into a big bottle of clear water. If he drank this entire bottle, it'd be better to send him to the hospital right away," Lin Chaoen explained with a smile.

Jiang Chen glanced at him but didn't say much.

A few enforcers in black combat suits walked in, catching sight of the thugs on the ground as they eyed the bartender questioningly.

"They were the one escalating the conflict. They were taught a lesson." The bartender neutrally explained the situation. From his calm expression, it didn't seem to be his first time dealing with this sort of situation.

The enforcer smiled at Jiang Chen. "We apologized for your infringed rights. The people who started the conflict will receive a fifteen-day imprisonment sentence."

Afterwards, the enforcers walked up with handcuffs and escorted the people from the ground and away.

The enforcers from Sixth Street would always have a courteous attitude, but in times of conflict, they would not hesitate to pull out their gun to shoot.

Seeing the cops take the people away, the crowd began to disperse because there was nothing more to see. The bar returned to its previous busy atmosphere. The gamblers rolled die, and alcoholics nursed their cups.

The woman in heavy makeup was prepared to strike up a conversation with Jiang Chen before she suddenly realized that he was not there anymore.

...

In the alley beside the bar.

There were deserted junks covered by layers of dust that had accumulated over time. The area was dimly lit, and mutated moss covered the walls.

It had been a while since anybody had passed by this area, but two figures now stood there.

"Speak your mind. Why did you travel so far to find me?" Jiang Chen looked at Lin Chaoen with an odd expression.

He didn't recall going to Jia City before. Could reputation spread through the air?

Regardless, Lin Chaoen's ability was not to be underestimated. To be able to wander the wasteland freely without a large group to protect him, only those with insane powers could do that. Jiang Chen was also curious to know why he sought him.

Seeing Jiang Chen ask straightforwardly, the grin on Lin Chaoen's face began to fade into a more serious expression.

"A few days ago, a mutated human began moving towards Wanghai City and destroyed a survivors' gathering spot."

"It was a bandit nest," Jiang Chen shrugged and added.

"Whatever it was, I followed the mutated human's tracks to Songjiang in Wanghai City, but then I only found proof of it being attacked. I came to Sixth Street shortly after and heard rumors about you in the bar. Based on the information, the real outcome must be that the mutated human destroyed the Huizhong Mercenaries, and they happened to bump into you, after which you wiped them out."

"You could interpret it that way. And?"

"I've been trying to find you, but all I heard was that you were in the Qingpu area but not the exact location. Now we've met by coincidence today, boss of Fishbone Base, Jiang Chen." Lin Chaoen stared into Jiang Chen's eyes as he spoke in a low undertone.

"So why did you want to find me?" Jiang reiterated the question.

He didn't want to be involved with a mutated human again. Fighting them was a lost cause.

Lin Chaoen seemed to have expected Jiang Chen's reaction. After a pause, he continued, "Based on our information, the mutated human's force has been gathering in the western area of Wanghai City."

[Western area? That's Qingpu and Songjia? They're moving in this direction?]

Jiang Chen's face suddenly changed colors. His Fishbone Base was in the Qingpu area. But then he remembered something and looked suspiciously at Lin Chaoen.

"Wait, if you're in Jia City, the mutated humans moving towards Wanghai City would be a good thing for you. Why did you come find me?"

"You don't know the conflicts between us and the mutated human, so obviously you would suspect my intentions. The Defenders' job is to defend against the mutated humans."

Lin Chaoen paused and said, "In the past few years, they've been using Area Seven as their base to capture, raid, and enslave people from Jia City. Any resistance was met with death. People of the right age were submerged into vials to receive new life—and become di*kless like them. Their existence is anti-human to begin with, and so you and I fight against a common enemy."

Jiang Chen quietly gazed at Lin Chaoen, and after a while, said, "Why are the mutated humans coming to Wanghai City? Since you've found me, you must have some clues about their intentions."

"Precisely." Lin Chaoen nodded, then took out the computer and expanded the full-sensory map.

His finger placed on a spot in the city center, he continued, "Carmen Pharmaceutical... they were researching genetic

medications and production businesses. It was rumored that they had a partnership with the military."

"So?" Jiang Chen didn't seem to care.

"Under the partnership, their project was based on the scenario that should the world erupt into a full-scale nuclear war, what would allow PAC citizens to gain radiation resistance in a short time, making them become the sole adapters in the new world. The result of this project was precisely the FEV virus."

Jiang Chen was stunned, and he looked at Lin Chaoen in disbelief. He recalled that mutated humans were the product of merging with the FEV virus.

"FEV virus? Used on us?" Jiang Chen still couldn't fathom the truth.

He always thought that the FEV virus was a biological weapon created in a laboratory to be used against citizens on the enemy's side. He didn't dare to imagine that the virus had been designed with its own citizens in mind.

"Nothing would spread faster than a virus; it was the most efficient means of transmission. But the FEV virus was incomplete. The half-finished product was effective only in special nutrients, and it would create misshapen humans who were unable to reproduce. Let's not discuss whether the authorities were humane or not. What's critical now is that these deformed, di*kless things seem to have obtained some information that led them to believe

that within the Carmen Pharmaceutical building, there is an improved version of the FEV virus that could lead them to a state of higher evolution. It would also allow them to gain the reproductive ability that they had always dreamed of."

Jiang Chen's face completely changed when he heard those words.

"Why don't you go to the pharmaceutical company before them? And destroy the improved version of the FEV virus?"

Lin Chaoen immediately rejected the proposal while shaking his head. "Impossible. First, the company is located within a high-radiation area. Unless you have power armor or radiation-resistant suits, the iodine in the EP would not be enough to approach the area. Also, even if we did arrive at Carmen Pharmaceutical, we wouldn't be able to enter the building without the passcode. The security robot would eliminate any unidentified target attempting to break in."

"Then blow the entire building up!" Jiang Chen said viciously.

Lin Chaoen gave Jiang Chen an odd look. "A building that could survive the nuclear missile, what kind of explosives do you think could blow it up?"

Jiang Chen was completely listless.

"Fu*k, why don't you go to the Sixth Street officials to talk about

this?"

Lin Chaoen smiled bitterly. "The council wouldn't believe me, and I don't have the confidence to persuade the minimum requirement of five council members. To be fair, it's a problem for our Jia City. Even if the mutated human obtained the improved virus, they would return to Jia City to take a bath and devastate the survivors there. Do you think Sixth Street would leave their golden age of development and fight a war of lost causes?"

"Then why bother finding me?"

"Because the mutated humans will pass by your front door. They have no reason not to bite into the juicy meat beside their mouths," Lin Chaoen shrugged and said honestly.

"You're saying my Fishbone Base is a piece of juicy meat?" Jiang Chen disagreed.

"In terms of defense, power armors aren't able to utilize their advantage in mobility, especially since you don't have many to begin with, according to the marks left behind on the battlefield. On the other side, there are more than forty mutated humans."

With narrowed eyes, Jiang Chen locked gazes with Lin Chaoen.

Lin Chaoen fearlessly met Jiang Chen's stare, retracted the computer pen, and extended his right hand again.

"We can partner up, against the common enemy."

Chapter 136: For our interest

"Best of luck to us."

Jiang Chen shook Lin Chaoen's hand.

Just as Lin Chaoen said, if the mutated humans passed through Qingpu, there was a large probability that a battle would erupt. Hoping that the mutated humans wouldn't discover Fishbone Base was as unreliable as leaving a sheep farm open while praying the wolf pack wouldn't attack.

From the mutated humans' perspective, every "ancient human" was a stubborn coward, while normal people viewed these "neo-humans" as ugly and di*kless. From the start, the two sides had no chance of negotiating.

The two exchanged communication channels for both camps, and Lin Chaoen, in a show of sincerity, agreed that if the mutated humans from Area Seven showed signs of movement, the Defenders would notify Fishbone Base immediately. At the same time, they signed a defense pact against the mutated humans. Once the mutated humans started their march towards Wanghai City, both parties would send their forces to intervene.

For a common interest.

Lin Chaoen left right away as soon as they finished business to return to Jia City and report their status. Jiang Chen rested for a bit before a bitter smile appeared on his face.

"Mutated humans. Fu*k, why is there trouble after trouble."

He had to speed up his armed force development.

But winter was approaching. Maybe under the harsh conditions, the mutated humans would choose to march to Wanghai City in the coming spring?

[Hopefully, the snow is thick enough.]

He shook his head and walked towards the Fake Legs Specialty Store. On the way, he happened to meet Zhou Guoping who was chatting with the construction worker.

Seeing his boss, Zhou Guoping immediately sent the construction worker away and walked up to fawn on Jiang Chen. "Boss, need me for anything?"

As soon as he and Zhou Guoping entered the room, he closed the door and got straight to the point. "If I want to purchase heavy weapons, how do I go about doing this?"

Zhou Guoping paused and began to give it serious thought.

"If it's in Wanghai City, Sixth Street could produce it, but the Group of Ten Council has restrictions in place to prevent heavy weapons from entering the external market. Other than Sixth

Street, the Beer Can Company in the north specializes in heavy weaponry production without any restrictions. Due to the long distance and limited production capability, however, they don't have a representative here accepting orders."

"What about outside of Wanghai City?"

"There is a heavy weaponry factory in Su City, but due to high prices, not many can afford them. It's been a while since I saw them," Zhou Guoping said hesitantly.

"Expensive? How expensive?"

"Very." Zhou Guoping forced a smile. "They only sell giant weapons. Based on my understanding, the 85mm tank cannon is priced at seven thousand crystals. Also, as long as you can afford it, they even sell tanks."

Tanks? Jiang Chen's eyes instantly lit up.

"Pay attention. When they're here, immediately notify me. I'll head back to Fishbone Base after this, so you'll take care of the tasks here." Jiang Chen patted him on the shoulder and encouraged him, "Do a good job. I have faith in you."

Ignoring how the ecstatic Zhou Guoping tried to suck up to him, he left a few hundred crystals as an initial fund to start the store before he left. It was already the start of October, and the plan for the apocalypse was about to start. He had to go back and make

some preparations.

...

After leaving Sixth Street, Jiang Chen headed for the sewerage entrance guarded by the Zhao Corporation.

Following the surge in trade between Fishbone Base and Zhao Corporation, the sewerage had been upgraded. The mold and dirt on the road were cleaned away, and the confusing intersections were locked off. The wall corners were even installed with light-activated cold lamps.

He took the elevator back to the surface where a soldier guarding the elevator saluted. With a nod of acknowledgment, Jiang Chen followed the closed-off concrete walkway to the inside of Fishbone Base.

At the shooting range outside of the wall, Jiang Chen found Zhao Gang.

"How do you feel?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"Not bad." Zhao Gang nodded. After that terrible incident, the audacious man had become reticent.

"Ten for ten, damn, how is this not bad?" Cheng Weiguo carried the rifle and spoke while laughing.

Jiang Chen looked at Zhao Gang with surprise and nodded appreciatively.

"I have a mission for you."

"Mhmm." Zhao Gang agreed without asking for the details.

Jiang Chen took out the computer pen and marked Area Seven on the map.

"I need you to head for Area Seven and find out as much information as you can about the mutated humans. Their camp spot, combat power, number of people... the more specific, the better."

The more he knew about the enemy, the higher the chances of winning against them. The mutated humans were stationed in Area Seven, and Fishbone Base had no information on them at all. Based on the crossfire from last time, however, mutated humans were not to be underestimated even with armor or firepower.

Jiang Chen also didn't completely trust Lin Chaoen's words. It was far more reliable to send his own men.

"Understood. When should I leave?"

"Tomorrow. Take some time to prepare. If you need any

equipment, just let Chen Weiguo know and take it directly from the armory."

"Ten nutrient supplies, as well as this rifle." Zhao Gang shook his head. "In terms of scouting, the probability of engaging in combat is low."

Although the base had compressed crackers, in terms of convenience, it could not match the nutrient supply that could replenish both energy and water.

"That's fair. Then I'll count on you. Be quick," Jiang Chen patted him on the shoulder as he said seriously.

"Mhmm." As expected, he nodded without any arguments against the mission.

...

Returning to the mansion, Jiang Chen happened to bump into Lin Lin who came out of shower humming.

Seeing her so happy, he couldn't resist the temptation to make fun of her.

"You don't short circuit?"

Lin Lin's eyebrows traveled all the way up, but as she was about

to give a rebuttal, she thought about how she was under his control and froze in place.

Jiang Chen was surprised to see her hold her tongue.

"Oh, what's the progress on the mission I gave you?"

"Do you think scientific research is like masturbation? It will come out after rubbing a little?" Finally, Lin Lin couldn't resist the temptation to curse.

Jiang Chen looked at her oddly. He couldn't connect the vulgar words with the elf-like looks of this girl.

"Although I haven't done research before, have you masturbated?"

Lin Lin's face turned red, and cursed under her breath, "Pervert." She ran away with her head buried.

[It's so fun teasing this girl.]

Seeing Lin Lin flee the scene, Jiang Chen laughed malevolently.

But first things first.

He shook his head and put Lin Lin's matter aside to go up to the

second floor and find Sun Jiao.

"You're back?" Sun Jiao eyes brightened when she saw him. She dropped the items in her hands and with upturned lips, greeted him delightfully.

"Mhmm." Jiang Chen hugged the passionate Sun Jiao and asked, "How's the bank mission doing?"

"We've shipped the gold back. It's around fifteen tons. The marks have been sanded off, and right now, it's piled up in the pool," she said intimately. Sun Jiao looked deeply into Jiang Chen's eyes.

"Thank you." He touched her soft hair and returned her gaze.

"Of course. I'm so tired." She stretched and was pleased to hear the light gulping nose. Smirking, she continued, "How are you planning on rewarding me?"

"Ahem, let's talk about this tonight." Jiang Chen touched his nose, looking away shyly.

He caught sight of something strange beside the bed.

[That is... a towel?]

"Eh? What is this?" Jiang Chen craned his neck to look curiously at the strange item.

Sun Jiao's face immediately turned red. She dashed to the bedside and hid the unknown item under the blankets.

"What? What are you talking about?" Her eyes began to wander. It was rare for her to play dumb.

Curious!

Jiang Chen was unable to control his interest and began to ask energetically, "The thing you just hid...."

"No! What did I just hide?" Sun Jiao's eyebrows rose as she said fiercely.

"No, no, no, I saw it with my own eyes."

"Illusion! It must be an illusion!" Vehemently denying it, Sun Jiao blushed and pushed at Jiang Chen who tried to leap over to see. She then slammed the door shut.

"Phew—"

Sun Jiao sat on the bed and exhaled.

Her heart was beating so fast.

"Ahhhhh, this is too embarrassing. It's not like me!"

Sun Jiao's hands patted her burning-red face as she dove into the bed. She reached for the blanket and covered herself like an ostrich.

The treasure hidden under the blanket was exposed; it was an old magazine. Based on the publication date, it was printed before the war.

"How to capture your boyfriend's heart - weave a scarf for him in the cold winter"

"Attached: Simple weaving technique"

Sun Jiao, who had been born in a survival base and lived wandering the wasteland, didn't know what love was. It was something she had never learned before. She picked up this magazine from the bank, unaware of what scarves were, but she was intrigued by the printed words on the front page.

Could a scarf be this magical? Sun Jiao didn't really understand.

But if Jiang Chen came from before the war, then it had to be useful for him.

She firmly believed this.

...

Standing by the poolside, Jiang Chen observed the lustrous gold. In the apocalypse, this gold was worth less than dirt.

He took a deep breath and submerged his conscious into the storage dimension.

Compared to before, the storage dimension seemed to have expanded by a lot—from one cubic meter to five cubic meters now. But Jiang Chen was still clueless on how the interdimensional bracelet evolved. Charging it repeatedly seemed to be useful, but otherwise, it was not obvious.

The overload from last time seemed to have increased the size of the storage dimensional by quite a lot, but Jiang Chen didn't dare to do anything so dangerous again. Instead of overloading it, it could potentially "fry" the bracelet.

Putting the gold into the storage dimension, Jiang Chen was prepared to return to the modern world, but he suddenly remembered the "promise" he made with Sun Jiao. A smirk appeared on his face.

[I'll go back tomorrow morning.]

Chapter 137: Close the door!

When he left Sun Jiao's room, it was already noon.

A smile rose unbidden to his face when he recalled the intimacy from last night.

She seemed to sense that he'd be gone for a while because she'd been extra passionate.

By the time the two fell asleep in each other's embrace, it was already late into the night.

He stretched his stiff body and walked to the bathroom.

With a light press on the touchscreen, hot water filled the sink. Taking a deep breath, he leaned against the sink and submerged his head into the water.

After holding his breath—

"Huuuu!"

He resurfaced from the water and briskly shook his head feeling refreshed. Jiang Chen looked at his reflection in the mirror and let the water droplets roll down his face.

"It's been three months."

He touched his chin, lost in his memories of three months ago, back in July. It was the middle of summer, and as soon as he came here, he encountered a girl on the verge of starvation.

Jiang Chen laughed.

He wasn't sure why he wanted to laugh. Maybe because the experiences in these past three months had been too exciting? Or because of his own transformation? Or perhaps because it'd been too fulfilling. He vigorously shook the water from his head and picked up the electric razor.

"There are many things in this world that are quite convenient." He plastered a thin layer of plastic wrap around his mouth, and with a click of a button, he could shave his beard away in a second.

This was a treasure to the world.

In the washroom itself, there was a digitalized shower, a smart toilet, multi-functional bathtub with a sauna function, and even the toilet paper was more advanced than the modern world's.

"Life is a magical journey." Jiang Chen looked outside the window.

The view faced the newly expanded wall. On top of the metal scaffolding were workers and engineers order the construction....

He remembered that in the beginning, his only thought was to obtain gold and become a carefree, wealthy man. And as soon as he got his wish, the first thing he did was spend it lavishly, blowing it all away and experiencing the life he had envied before.

But he fulfilled those wishes a long time ago.

"Now is it power?" Jiang Chen stared at his right hand. The water droplets on the back of his hand reflected his matured face.

Once he had the five hundred million USD in his hands, a sprout called ambition grew in his heart. From that point onward, troubles began to hound him.

Sometimes, he imagined what would have happened if he came to this world for the first time and didn't walk into this mansion. What if he didn't encounter the naughty and cute girl, didn't meet so many unforgettable people?

Sneak some gold and sell it discreetly in the modern world, becoming a rich man in the shadows. If he met malicious forces, he would switch cities, or even citizenship, instead of using his power to push them away. If he met mutated bacteria he was unable to resist, he would leave the area. This place was an ATM for him anyway. There was no reason to risk his life to eliminate the bacteria source.

But it would be a different kind of life.

In the modern world, he would enjoy a lavish lifestyle, and in the apocalypse, he would discreetly explore. No attachment, no concerns, perhaps that was the safer choice? Perhaps it was the best way to survive in this world filled with danger?

"But it would lack the excitement of a vibrant life?" Jiang Chen shook his head laughing and walked out the door.

Without a myriad of beautiful encounters, what was the purpose of living?

Since on productivity alone, man could not beat machine.

...

At the door, he met Yao Yao on her way to the washroom.

She walked half-asleep and rubbed her drowsy eyes with her small hand. The pouted mouth looked like a cherry freshly picked off with the morning dew. Because she was anemic, she couldn't handle mornings very well.

Although she seemed to be overly-conscious about her small flaw, Jiang Chen didn't care. A dizzy loli was too cute to be true, especially when she was asleep and subconsciously sought to hug anything warm.

Ahem, don't ask how he knew.

Just as Jiang Chen was about to say hello, Yao Yao's drowsy face turned beet red, and her body temperature spiked.

"Ahh.... G-good morning!"

"Good morning. Uhh, are you okay?" Jiang Chen asked carefully as he gave a confused look at Yao Yao who had her head buried low.

"N-nothing."

Her adorable eyes avoided his, and her hands fiddled with each other behind her back.

[She doesn't seem to be in a good mood?]

Just as Jiang Chen was at a loss, Lin Lin also appeared walking towards the bathroom. When she saw him standing by the door, Lin Lin's pale face blushed, but she didn't act shyly. Instead, she threw a dirty glare at Jiang Chen who had put her in an awkward position.

"Pervert!"

"What, what did I do?" Completely lost, he didn't bother arguing back. Question marks floated over his head as he looked back and forth between Yao Yao and Lin Lin.

But the two of them didn't have the slightest intention to open their mouths. Yao Yao seemed to want to say something, but her trembling lips suggested that she was too embarrassed to say it.

The odd atmosphere lingered.

Finally, the kind Yao Yao broke the silence.

"Umm." Yao Yao still didn't meet Jiang Chen's gaze, her cherry-like mouth pouting in displeasure. She murmured, "It is understandable that a ripe apple tastes good. Yao Yao is not angry. But it is better to be quieter because a small animal can only drool and watch... and be envious."

Her voice became fainter the more she felt wronged.

[What's going on?]

Dumbfounded, Jiang Chen stared at Yao Yao. Her frail and unhappy attitude was cute, but what was this strange way of guilt-tripping?

"Pervert." Out of the corner of his eye, he caught sight Lin Lin mocking him.

Thinking of this pervert's terrible attitude towards her, she felt particularly jubilant seeing his awkward attitude.

[Finally taking revenge!]

She wanted to burst into song to celebrate.

But Lin Lin clearly overestimated her importance. Just as she finished saying that, a chilling stare was directed at her.

"I think a digitalized human doesn't need to eat. Or are you prepared to tell me what happened?" Jiang Chen glared at her as he threatened without considering her feelings.

It was only when Jiang Chen bullied Lin Lin that he didn't feel any guilt at all.

Oh no, not even guilt, the sensation was through the roof.

Lin Lin's expression took a turn for the worse.

As usual, her confident look became sorrowful.

"You, you dare to threaten me.... Ahhhhhh! Enough, you're a pervert! Remember to keep it down when you do that thing at night! And, and! Close the door!" Lin Lin ran away sadly.

"Uh?"

Shut the door? Keep it down?

Jiang Chen was lost until he recalled Sun Jiao's voice.... He immediately looked at Yao Yao with difficulty. She was still throwing a bit of a tantrum.

Her pouting lips were about to touch the tip of her nose.

"Yao Yao is already working so hard.... And doesn't taste bad.... The one with the loud voice must be happy."

[It doesn't have to do with taste.]

He finally comforted Yao Yao while feeling as though the mansion had become a little awkward.

Chapter 138: Improving the Helicopter

The base was bustling.

Excluding the women in the "care center," the base's population approached 150, and they were the backbone of the future Fishbone Base. Once the newly expanded wall was completed, two more apartment buildings would be added, and then they could consider accepting foreign populations.

Lu Huasheng was still in charge of the construction. Needless to say, the ex-chief developer of Huajian Real Estate certainly had his strengths. Jiang Chen gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his ability, and he proved himself by designing the base's structure.

An honest and hardworking man like him was best suited for jobs that required basic planning with no room for mistakes. With his foresight, Jiang Chen was able to choose the right people, and Lu Huasheng didn't disappoint him. He personally stood with the construction team every day on the front lines to expand the wall with 120% efficiency.

For someone like Cheng Weiguo, who had loyalty and a strong passion, Jiang Chen assigned him a role in the army as the leader of the civil force responsible for guarding the base and training the soldiers.

As for Zhou Guoping, he was the type to be smooth and flattering, so Jiang Chen naturally stationed him in the Sixth Street. This was partially because he had prior experience in

intelligence collection and also because he had a bad history with Chu Nan. Although it was not directly Zhou Guoping's fault, he did violate Chu Nan's "goddess."

In front of him, multiple times.

For the sake of keeping the harmony in the base, it was not a terrible decision to separate them.

On his way to a warehouse, Jiang Chen passed by the community center, which was a temporary hangar to store the Type-51 Transport Helicopter.

...

Entering the hangar, Jiang Chen found Chu Nan hard at work repairing the helicopter.

Virtual reality training chambers inside the base were installed with general weaponry training, and they could also copy general technical skills from the city library. But for a military transportation vehicle like the Helicopter-51, which was considered top secret before the war, it was excluded from the civil force training courses.

Therefore, the only person able to repair and operate this helicopter was Chu Nan.

"How's the situation?" Jiang Chen asked as he approached.

"Terrible." Chu Nan didn't turn around. His only response was to wipe his sweat with his arm and continue arranging the messy wiring.

"Can it be repaired?" He glanced at the helicopter that seemed to come straight from science-fiction and touched the circular side wings. He didn't see a rotor on the helicopter, but based on the appearance, the suspension force most likely came from this circular structure. The design of the body was aerodynamic with a hatch door open in the back. The words "Transport Helicopter" along with the PAC symbol had all but faded, and the metal frame in the front was caved in from the impact. Even the bulletproof glass was completely shattered. The appearance wasn't so terrible, but Jiang Chen did question whether it would ever fly again.

"Should be fixable. The damage to the exterior is fine since it can be easily replaced with metal parts, but the problem is the electronic parts inside. Dammit, the entire engine control is burned. Can you believe it? Inside the city center, I met a monster that can fire an EMP from its mouth." Chu Nan cursed as he retracted a palm-sized box from the helicopter's side and connected the exposed wiring to the computer on the side to input some data.

Jiang Chen's expression turned strange when he heard Chu Nan's words. He himself had encountered a monster that could emit EMP before.

"Isn't it hard to see mutants that can fire EMP?"

Chu Nan turned around with a look of surprise.

"Actually, it's common to see mutants that can fire EMP?"

Jiang Chen paused.

Now that he thought about it, he knew Chu Nan ended up in that area because he failed a mission, but he never asked about the specifics.

"The mission was to eliminate a mutant creature and collect the crystal. We sent out two helicopters as well as a force of twelve soldiers equipped with power armors. When we arrived at the target location, I suspended the helicopter above the yellowish-green particles. Then our captain requested missile support.

"The missile would expose the body, the soldiers parachute, kill, and collect the crystal. That was the routine, and it wasn't my first time out on such a mission.

"It was a beautiful hit. The electromagnetic cannon fired from Liuding Town directly hit the building and the concrete tumbled down like an avalanche. Just when we thought all we needed to do was go down and collect the crystals," Chu Nan paused with a mysterious smile, "a red meat cannon as tall as half the building fired a red beam into the sky. It hit nothing, but the two helicopters immediately stalled.

"The monster seemed to have exploded, so the parachuted

soldiers must have been successful. But who knows?" Chu Nan shrugged as he inserted a processor into the helicopter body.

"Did no one from Liuding Town come to save you?"

"That's impossible." Chu Nan's mouth twitched. "For Liuding Town, pilots can be mass produced. The only thing of value was this metal scrap right here, but the point of the crash was too far from the port. I almost flew half a city."

Jiang Chen fell into silence.

He suddenly recalled his time in the underground fallout shelter. The artificial intelligence had described the bug that infiltrated the fallout shelter.

[Hehe, even if it missed, your metal pieces will become a metal casket.]

"Klein Particles?" Jiang Chen muttered to himself.

"What's that?" Chu Nan asked confusedly.

"Nothing." He would ask Lin Lin about Klein Particles later. For now, Jiang Chen avoided the topic. "Oh, once you finish repairing the helicopter, could you make some modifications to it?"

"Modifications?"

"Mhmm. Such as installing a 50mm machine gun on the side and welding a fire cannon on the top."

Different than Liuding Town, Fishbone Base's focus was on land; hence, there was no need for long-distance combat, and it would better suit Fishbone's combat needs if the Type-51 was converted into an air cannon vehicle.

"Do you think the helicopter is a truck? That you could weld anything on top?" Chu Nan couldn't help but ridicule him.

"What's the problem?" Stumped, Jiang Chen frowned.

"There's a big problem." Chu Nan shook his head as he dragged the wiring from the computer. He picked up the screwdriver again to adjust parts inside the helicopter. "Balance is a big issue. Even casual modifications could cause the helicopter to be unable to suspend itself or fly a certain distance before it flips over."

"Then let's not do a casual modification." Jiang Chen laughed as he patted Chu Nan on the shoulder. "I'll leave the trouble to you, the expert. I need you to add some weapons on this thing—the stronger the firepower, the better."

Hearing such an unprofessional request made Chu Nan rub his face with his palms. He let out a helpless sigh.

"I'll try my best. I'll install a machine gun on the side and design

a new fire-control system. As for the fire cannon, I'll install it near the back hatch. It should be okay if it's manually controlled. But if we modify it like this, the transport helicopter will become a combat helicopter."

Jiang Chen smiled at Chu Nan's doubts.

"Exactly what I want."

Chapter 139: Harmonious

After parting from Chu Nan, Jiang Chen took a stroll around the base.

Now that everything was on the right track, there weren't many things that he needed to do as the boss. As long as he set the overarching direction, there were others to take care of the rest. For now, all he needed to do was transport food over from the modern world?

For now, the tasks related to the Crusade's aftermath were finally resolved.

The trouble with the mutated humans could be left for next spring. This chapter of the apocalypse could finally be turned, and now he had to head back to the modern world to take care of the mercenaries. Before leaving, Jiang Chen headed to the warehouse and found Wang Qin verifying the supplies.

The freckled girl was more mature compared to when she first arrived, developing an air of professionalism. He remembered that she'd been like a startled squirrel. With her constantly anxious attitude and top-notch accounting grades, he assigned her to take care of the warehouse.

Honestly, Jiang Chen felt happy watching the growth of his employees.

Once she heard out Jiang Chen's intention, she took out a tablet

terminal and reported the status of supplies within the base.

"We've organized the supplies that are ready to trade with Sixth Street. There aren't many food supplies left, and with the current consumption speed, it can last for at most ten days," she said with concern.

The supplies were carefully recorded in a list, so precise that each bag of rice was listed with its warehouse location and by weight. The comprehensive software had also been designed by Yao Yao while the game <New Era> was passed on to Du Yongkang for an update. Since he used to be a game developer, it matched his skill set.

Yao Yao, other than the warehouse management software, also installed some more interesting gadgets for the base.

For example, she set up the worker management system used by Lu Huasheng during construction, the control system for the cameras around the base, as well as the drone patrol system.

"You don't have to worry. I'll take care of it. What about the firearms?" It was easy for him to take care of it once he returned to the modern world.

Seeing the boss' confident look, Wang Qin smiled and nodded. She pressed a few more buttons on the tablet and pulled up another list.

He roughly scanned the items on the list before Jiang Chen asked her to take him to the weaponry.

He took around ten Reaper rifles as well as one Ghost sniper, a box of ammunition, and ten grenades before returning to the base.

He put the supplies away in the storage dimension and approached the poolside in the backyard. With a deep breath, he commenced traveling.

When he opened his eyes, he was lying on a soft bed.

He sat up and shook his head. Taking out the phone, he called Robert's hidden number.

The phone rang three times before it went through.

"Hi, buddy, how have you been?"

"Not bad. How goes the business?" Jiang Chen didn't bother with small talk and cut straight to the point.

"Don't worry, the Irish guy loves acting." Delighted laughter could be heard from a distance on the other side. "I've already arranged the things on Ukraine's side. When do you plan on leaving?"

"I booked the ticket for tomorrow. Get Nick to leave, we'll meet

in Kiev."

"Okay, but he's already there, so contact him once you arrive. I've sent the itinerary to your email, Mr. President," Robert joked.

After exchanging some light banter, Jiang Chen hung up, and after thinking for a bit called the food store owner he was partnered with.

It would still be sent to the same storage, and the shipment would arrive in the afternoon. It was most likely his last order with them. Once Xinlong Food Processing Plant got on track, he would opt to use that channel instead. Stuffing the phone back into his pocket, Jiang Chen got up and left the bedroom.

A mansion this spacious with only two people living inside did feel empty. He stepped on the expensive hardwood floor. Looking at the delicate decorations, Jiang Chen suddenly felt emotional. He'd bought this mansion a while back, but he never took the time to enjoy it since he'd been so busy handling tasks in the modern and apocalypse world. It seemed as though he was living life with too rough of pace?

Maybe sometime later, he would take a vacation.

As he ruminated, Jiang Chen strolled into the kitchen.

He gently pushed the glass door to the kitchen and saw Ayesha with an apron, concentrated on chopping vegetables.

A smirk appeared on his face as he sneaked closer and embraced Ayesha from behind.

The serene figure stiffened but loosened up as soon as she realized who it was.

"You're back."

Ayesha gently smiled and intimately tilted her head to rub it against Jiang Chen's face.

"Mhmm, did you prepare the meal for me?" This girl's Chinese was getting better and better. The technology of the future was truly remarkable.

"Not yet, but I am now." Ayesha smiled and softly squeezed Jiang Chen's hand. She led him to the side and opened the fridge. "What do you want to eat? My cooking has improved a lot."

"I want to eat you." Jiang Chen grinned and blew into her ear.

Her perfect face colored by a tinge of pink, she looked away from embarrassment. She faintly asked, "Could we wait until after the meal?"

"After the meal? Don't you want to do it here?"

"H-here?" A hint of anxiousness appeared in her eyes.

Seeing her adorable look, Jiang Chen was satisfied and didn't tease her anymore, so he finished his sentence with the same smirk. "I want to eat you...r cooked dishes."

Ayesha froze, then angrily threw a few soft punches at Jiang Chen's chest before leaving his hug.

"We'll eat fried fish today."

It was one of the few times he felt like the head of the family.

He didn't interrupt Ayesha from cooking anymore since he didn't want to eat overcooked dishes.

He sank into the living room sofa and relaxed while watching a Hollywood film in his home theater that cost ten thousand RMB. It wasn't as sophisticated as the one in Sixth Street's Paradise Island Hotel, but it was a different experience.

It was the perk of being rich. Most people used their laptops to watch a film on 720p, and some would spend money to see it in IMAX or 3D. But the real luxury was to enjoy a theater-level film experience in the comfort of your own home without the annoying kids.

It would be even better with some popcorn.

The movie finished exactly at noon. Ayesha virtuously set the table before calling Jiang Chen over to eat.

A full-course lunch.

In the center was a fried fish dish seasoned with red soup and green onion. It was Ayesha who thought to combine Chinese and Middle Eastern dishes. Without a doubt, the aesthetics were superb, and the taste was ephemeral.

"Mhmm, wow, your cooking is getting better and better," Jiang Chen raised his thumb and exclaimed.

Ayesha softly smiled. "As long as you like it."

"How have you been?"

"Pretty good. The environment here is peaceful," Ayesha exclaimed. She lowered her head to look at the utensils in front of her as she quietly said, "Just like heaven."

Slightly lost, Jiang Chen watched Ayesha's face, but the words he was about to say was stuck in his throat.

"Hmm?" Sensing Jiang Chen's hesitation, Ayesha was confused and tilted her head slightly to look at him.

"Mhmm, I'm just uncertain now." Jiang Chen sighed, saying with a troubled smile, "I planned on taking you to Ukraine tomorrow, but since you just escaped from war, you would probably hate going back to it."

Ayesha quietly stood up and walked to his side. She surrounded him with her arms and gently pressed her face against his.

"I am yours. I'm willing to become your sword, to fight for you. If you need me, there's no need to hesitate, just use me."

"I never thought of you as a tool," Jiang Chen lightly said, placing his hands over hers, "and I've never used anyone. If you feel repulsive towards weapons, there's no need to force yourself—"

The rest was blocked.

The silence lasted for a brief moment before Ayesha removed her finger.

"If I felt weapons were repulsive, I never would've used them in the virtual reality. That thing doesn't belong here, right?"

Jiang Chen wasn't surprised, but his smile was still a bit forced.

"You knew?"

Although the mutated human that appeared out of thin air

should have exposed something already, Ayesha never asked, so he never had the opportunity to explain.

"Mhmm." Ayesha nodded.

"That training. Once you pass it, it'll unlock new weapons and new training materials that include more powerful rifles and even rifle without bullets."

[No bullets? Is it a Gauss rifle?]

Du Yongkang had misinterpreted Jiang Chen's words. He wanted him to add a limit on the virtual reality system to include only weapons that existed between the years 2000 and 2020, but Du Yongkang instead designed a "game mode" that gradually unlocked tiers as the training continued.

[Whatever. If it's Ayesha who knows, there's nothing to worry about.]

Sensing the trust in his body temperature, Ayesha gently closed her eyes.

"Tomorrow, we'll go to Ukraine."

Since Ayesha didn't feel repulsed, it would be pretentious to act uncertain about this question.

"Mhmm." Ayesha nodded.

"Do you know how to use a sniper? The Ghost Sniper."

"Yes." She trained in wielding that gun in the virtual reality training system.

"Once we arrive in Ukraine, I need you to protect me in trades. Because we're in a sensitive area and the business partner is no ordinary target, you might have to engage in combat with some civil force snipers."

Ayesha smiled and pressed her soft finger against Jiang Chen's lips.

"You're over-protective. I'm not small anymore."

Hearing this, Jiang Chen thought for a moment before a relieved smile appeared on his face.

"You're right."

Enjoying the tranquil moment, Jiang Chen suddenly thought of something and leaned closer to Ayesha's ear.

"Speaking of which, it's after the meal."

She remembered her promise to Jiang Chen in the kitchen, and she blushed again, lowering her head shyly.

"Mhmm, let's go back to the room."

"No."

"Eh?"

"Back to the kitchen."

It was an evil laugh.

That's right, incredibly evil.

Chapter 140: Arriving at Veit

Boris Boer International Airport.

A young man in a black sweater, casual pants, and a duff bag looked around the empty airport.

"What is your purpose of coming to Kane?" A middle-aged man in uniform looked up and glanced at him a few more times than usual while fidgeting with the passport in hand.

Asian face, two years ago, it would not be rare. But Veit now, any foreign face was worth the extra glance.

"Travel." The man smiled and exposed his white teeth.

The middle-aged officer was clearly shocked as he looked at him oddly again.

"I hope you enjoy your trip."

The passport was fine. The officer didn't say anything as he mechanically stamped it and let him go.

"Phew."

Walking out of the airport, Jiang Chen relaxingly stretched and scanned the unfamiliar street.

Veit's sky was clear.

Bright sunshine, clear blue sky, clean street, as well as the towering trees.

Baroque and Byzantine Style of architecture could be seen everywhere. The colorful brick walls resembled a small town in the middle ages. Other than the modern looking street lamp and signs, the vibrancy of rich culture was everywhere in the city.

He heard that Oesk and Lugansk were currently fighting, but the flames of war obviously didn't spread to here yet.

Even then, the streets looked empty.

Jiang Chen was disappointed to not be able to witness the "Beauty infested Kane" as rumors said.

Of course, the purpose of the trip was not to see beauties.

Not long, a personal vehicle stopped in front of him. The window rolled down, and a head with a red nose peeked out.

"Do you need a taxi?" Jiang Chen barely understood the English laced with a Russian accent.

"Of course, take me to Purimir Hotel."

Hearing this, the driver also glanced at him a few more times.

Although Jiang Chen's Chinglish was hard to understand, as a local, he easily made out the words " Primir Hotel."

Only the wealthy could afford those five-star hotels.

Jiang Chen opened the door, sat on the front passenger seat, and strapped on the seat belt. The sturdy looking Kanian driver started the car and drove out smoothly.

He heard that to ride in Kane, the first thing was to set the price. Or he would be scammed. A ride that only cost 30 may end up costing 150 once they arrive at the destination. But Jiang Chen didn't really mind as it was pocket change for him.

"Tell me about Veit, what's fun here," Jiang Chen started to chat with the driver by his side.

"Central Street and Independent Square are all not bad places. it's great for shopping and sight seeing." The driver was also talkative, he held the steering wheel and began telling Jiang Chen about the sightseeing places in Veit.

"If you are interested in the history and culture of the place, you could check out Golden Gate, a lot of tourists like to take pictures there. As well as the memorial museum in the right bank of the Dnieper River." When they started to talk about the historical

sights, the rigid face worn by time had a proud expression.

"Oh? Could you tell me about the memorial museum?" Jiang Chen was quite interested.

Although his destination for this trip was Oesk in the East and he probably won't have time to explore this beautiful city, it would be cool to listen to the perspective of a local.

But for some reason, when Jiang Chen asked about the specifics of the memorial museum. A gloom seemed to cover the driver's face.

"To remember the victory of defending the country. Darn, I remember when I was young, it was beautiful."

"What about now? I think this place is not bad." Jiang Chen looked out the window.

The weather was lovely, the sunshine was bright, a great place to explore.

"It's absolutely terrible," The driver said emotionlessly, "People with guns divided into two sides, and the innocent people are stuck in the middle. Back when Soviets ruled, this place was not like this."

Jiang Chen looked at him but didn't continue with the topic.

For the locals, it seemed to be a remorseful topic. The textbook he learned seemed to provide a simple black and white picture. That was the only perspective he saw about the entire event. He faintly recalled that when the Lenin Statue was pushed down, the Kaneian citizens were celebrating.

It was truly shocking when Veit welcomed democracy, the faces of the people were cheering.

Who actually represented them?

The silence only ensued for a brief moment before the driver spoke again, "Is this your first time in Kane?"

"That's right." Jiang Chen smiled.

After hesitating for a moment, the kind-hearted driver continued, "Veit's security is actually terrible, far worse than what Poroshenko described. Every day, there are countless foreigners like you being robbed, and of course, locals included too."

"I will be careful." Jiang Chen noncommittally smiled.

Robbery? He didn't think anyone in this world would be able to beat him.

Seeing Jiang Chen's unbothered expression, the driver didn't say

anything. He already did his part in alerting him.

"Also, some police may give you trouble due to your passport. In these situations, the easiest way is to pay him 100 USD, or just insist you haven't heard about this law, and demand that you contact your embassy before paying the fine."

"Mhmm, I'll be careful." For the kind-hearted alert of the driver, Jiang Chen happily accepted.

The car arrived at its destination.

When he got off the car, Jiang Chen left 100 USD on the seat and signaled there was no need for change.

The driver didn't refuse, but he looked grateful by the gesture.

The days were getting harder and harder, 100 USD for Jiang Chen may be nothing, but for him, it was a sizable amount of money.

Jiang Chen hauled his duffel bag into the hotel, and Jiang Chen showed the reception at the front desk his confirmation before he took the key.

The Primir Hotel was luxuriously decorated. The square and upright giant structure demonstrated the philosophy of Russian architecture and the European decor and lighting had a vibe of beauty originating from its detailing.

His hotel room was on the top floor, the most expensive presidential suite. But it was much cheaper compared to the Sheraton in Sanya as a night only cost him 2200 RMB.

The hotel had a complete set of amenities with a casino, bar, sauna, outdoor pool, gym, indoor pool, and spa. But because the purpose of the trip was not a vacation, he would not have the time to enjoy those things.

He carried the bag into the elevator, went to the top floor, and walked to the room that belonged to him.

Needless to say, Jiang Chen looked out of place standing there. Most of the people living here were all men in suits. His casual wear on the top floor filled with presidential suites did look odd.

But who cared? Being able to live here proved his financial ability.

The moment Jiang Chen took out a key, a blonde, blue-eyed, gorgeous figured beauty walked up with a cheerful smile.

"Do you need service?"

Surprisingly, although she stuttered a little, she spoke Han.

But after giving it a thought, Jiang Chen cursed in his mind.

How many fellow citizens did she "service" to be able to speak Han this well.

"No, thank you," Jiang Chen smiled courteously and rejected the offer.

If he were on vacation, Jiang Chen without standards wouldn't mind having some intimate affairs with the foreign beauty. But since he had business to take care of, he must resist the temptation.

She looked at Jiang Chen in surprise. In her memory, rarely would millionaires coming from China refuse to have an intimate affair with her. But she didn't say much more. She smiled and left in elegant steps.

Jiang Chen touched his slightly hot nose as he pushed open the door.

He turned on the lights. Jiang Chen threw the bag on the bed and walked straight to the window as he cautiously closed the blinds.

He took out a clock-sized device from his bag and placed it on the nightstand.

He thought that it was too dumb to use an EMP every time he needed to counter monitor, so Jiang Chen discussed with Yao Yao, and she used recycled electronic parts to create an anti-monitor

device.

Once opened, any cameras within a radius of 20m would be affected. The screen would be locked to a picture of the instant the machine started. Including communication, any communication attempted outside the whitelist would be blocked.

Although it may be redundant, it was better to be safe.

He took out his phone. Jiang Chen called Ayesha who left first.

"How's your side doing?"

"Arrived at Oesk rural area."

Under the plan, the two head to Kane separately. Not only do they take different flights, but Ayesha will also arrive a day ahead in Oesk rural area controlled by the government force.

Although Jiang Chen was still worried, Ayesha reassured him. Within the virtual reality training system, she received an A on sniper training.

With the help of the genetic vaccine and sophisticated weapons that far exceeded the current era, there was no need to worry.

Perhaps just like what Ayesha said, sometimes Jiang Chen could be a little overprotective.

"Mhmm. I will meet Nick tomorrow and then head to Oesk. I'll send you my itinerary. Be safe." Then, Jiang Chen hung up the phone.

He peeked at the small bright sky. Jiang Chen stretched, and then took out the laptop from his bag. Connected it to the wifi, and opened up his email.

<Sender: Robert>

Information: Mekanov, male, 36. Government force official, ranked Colonel, brigadier of the 92nd mechanized infantry.

Note: Confidant of the current president. Corrupt.

He stared at the word "Corrupt," as a dubious smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

Chapter 141: Flame of Chaos

Kane, located in Eastern Europe, was the largest country by landmass in Europe besides Russia. Formed when the Soviet dissolved in 1991.

Because of the fertile soil, Kane was the third largest grain exporting country in the world, renowned as the "granary of Europe." At the same time, Veit took the crown for the top ten "City of the beauties," selected by the world popular <Tourists Digest>

Food and beauty.

It was a beautiful place.

But the smokes of the war cast a gloom in this poorly trained place.

The root of the disaster had been buried during the hasty revolution in 1991.

January 9, 2014, a conflict under the name civil uprising led the country into political unrest.

The night of March 29, 2014, Crimea forwarded their clocks by two hours, officially using Moscow time.

Like a flag, cities in the East soon followed,

Oesk and Lugansk declared independence which officially erupted the civil war.

"Precisely speaking, I am a Belorussian, but I spent my childhood in Kane. My father was a Soviet soldier and met my mom in Veit." Nick had a cigarette in his mouth while holding the steering wheel.

This morning, Jiang Chen left the Primir Hotel and took a taxi to the agreed upon location to meet Nick. The pickup truck was bought from the local second-hand store, they were driving on the highway to Oesk.

"So, you were part of the government force?" Jiang Chen casually asked.

"You could say that before." Nick twitched his mouth. "But the formation is already gone, so you could say I am a deserter."

"The government force is weak?"

"Really weak." Nick blew out a smoke ring, and he looked perplexedly at the truck that just passed by. It was filled with wounded soldiers from the front line.

"The soldiers' combat abilities are all over the place, and the officials are corrupted to the bone. What's more important is that no one wants to fight for this country."

Kane East was the previous border between Soviet and NATO, and within the armory, there were hundreds of tons of bombs, mines, bullets and other firearms left by the previous Soviet military regions. As of now, the Kane army was still using the free firearms. And because of this, the Kane national defense industry has regressed to a frightening point. Kane military's "Phonex" National defense Battalion, even dragged the 122mm Howitzer used as a salvo for years in Veit on to the front line. The armored cash truck was currently being used as an armored vehicle.

At the same time, the lack of military funding also decreased the soldiers' will to fight. A company commander's salary is similar to Kazakhstan's soldier's salary which is equivalent to 1500 RMB, not even comparable to a waitress in a Han restaurant.

The salary was not enough to sustain a living. The soldiers were poorly trained. Selling the weapons in storage illegally to make money became a trend within the army. It was satirical that a lot of weapons were being destroyed in the front line, and without the ability to replenish the equipment, an ordinary citizen could still buy an armored vehicle for ten thousand USD.

It was the current status quo of the Kane army.

The civil force, however, was well equipped and had high morale. They possessed potent firepower and armored force. The war lasted for almost a year, and the civil force did not once experience ammo shortages. The large-scale bombing consistently left the Kane army scrambling. Based on reports, the thirty-six thousand civil forces possessed 8000 advanced Russian heavy

weapons, also based on US satellite, troops stationed in the Russian Kane border assisted the civil force at all time.

"If everyone fought for the country, I won't be here." Jiang Chen shrugged. "At least for those people with ability, let them fight for the force they could swear their allegiance for."

If weapons could be bought, then humans shouldn't be difficult at all. Although in principle, an active soldier of a country could not be sold to someone as mercenaries, but that was only in principle. If tank could be sold, what else couldn't be?

Another thing to note was that the reason why Jiang Chen didn't buy a tank partially because the future tanks did not consume oil. Rather, it used a large fuel rod similar to the power armor, while levitating tanks used batteries.

Another reason being that the modern age armor was way too thin. The material used was not even remotely comparable. Without exaggeration, the armored vehicle in the Fishbone base was comparable in armor strength with Frankberg primary tank 2A6. Of course, the discussion doesn't include the effect of impact angle on armor penetration.

"Swear allegiance? It's not about being worthy or not, no one is willing to fight. But the commission you are willing to pay is attractive, and the ten-year limit is not too harsh. At least if they fight for you, they could retire in Europe with the money." Nick smiled.

One million USD, enough to enjoy the rest of their life in comfort.

The pickup truck drove relatively steadily on the highway, black smoke could be faintly seen from afar. This place was fairly close to the front line, but this region was still considered safe.

But then, the car in front stopped.

"Traffic jam."

Nick frowned and stopped the car as well. He put the cigarette butt in the ashtray as he got off and walked to the car in front.

"What happened in front?"

"I don't know, the car in the front stopped, so I had to stop as well." A Slavic man stepped out of the car with a clueless expression on his face.

The cars in the back slammed on their horns as they were trying to release their anger. The clueless people all got out of their cars and tip-toed to see what was happening up front.

"Okay, friends, don't be anxious, please get back to your vehicle. The special force is taking care of a small problem, please remain calm." A soldier in camouflage walked front the front as he patted the car roof of each car, signaling people to stay calm.

"I want to know, what happened in front?" A chubby driver yelled out of his window.

"A bomb made a hole in the middle of the road, but it didn't detonate. To ensure that it will not blow you up when you drive by, we are trying to defuse it." The soldier shrugged as he leaned against the car.

To be honest, his relaxed look certainly made people feel calm.

"He is lazy, sticking around in the safe area after reporting. I did that a few times," Nick half-joked, and half-cursed. Seeing the young face, he felt like he saw the young him.

Jiang Chen looked at him in surprise. He thought Nick was the type to be meticulous at all times.

[Because it was not worth fighting for?]

He thought about it, but he instantly understood.

"Is it common to see these bombs?" Jiang Chen looked at the soldier slacking off as he asked Nick.

"Very common." Nick who sat back in the car lit another cigarette to waste time. "Both sides are wasting Soviet firearms, but these things are well past their expiration date. Take the "Dot-U" tactical

missile with only ten years of service life, for example, once it leaves the launch pad, you don't even know where it will fly to."

The soldier leaning against the car chatted with the driver with a smile on his face. He also took the cigarette passed to him.

Jiang Chen's eyebrows twitched. He was worried about the ability of the Kane army. If it were these types of fools, he wouldn't want them even if they were free.

Sensing Jiang Chen's concern, Nick smiled and spoke.

"Probably a new recruit. He could be an electrician yesterday, and today he was given a rifle to patrol the front line. Adjusting is hard. In this place, anything is possible."

"What about recruit training?" Jiang Chen asked, dumbfounded.

"No money and no one wanted to do it. The guy we are going to find, Mekanov, is a good guy. He will not use unqualified people to substitute good people. There are plenty of fighters in the Kane army. Take the army I was in for example. Although six out of ten were recruits, the remaining four were great people. Especially the guy from Cossack, his shooting was insane."

Jiang Chen fell into a short silence as he thought about another problem.

"Right now, is he willing to bring the fighters in the army out?"

"Why not?" Nick shrugged. "The war is not going to be swayed by one or two soldiers. Especially since you are paying enough money."

To the Makanov guy, Jiang Chen's bribe was also one million USD, payable in gold. The only thing he needed to do was to pick the right people, sign a few spots, and provide a few missing reports.

Suddenly, a deafening explosion erupted from a distance.

Thick smoke rose, and people watched the chaos from afar as they began to frighteningly curse. Some people took out their phones and started recording.

The soldier was clearly stunned by the explosion as he looked blankly at the highway in front.

After a long time, the soldier looked at the Kane driver that he just chatted with.

"Perhaps our comrades successfully detonated the bomb?"

The cars in the front began to move gradually.

The danger was already alleviated. Regardless, a bomb could not blow up twice.

Seeing this, Nick also started the car. The good thing was that there were not a lot of cars on the road, to begin with. So, it didn't cause a massive blockage.

When they passed the frightening bomb hole, Jiang Chen saw traces of bloody remains.

"Looks like the special force's method of detonation is quite unique."

Hearing that, Nick cracked a smile, his words had a satirical tone, "Special force? The only force worthy of this name already defected to Russia."

As the two chatted back and forth to kill time, a white van followed behind them.

The tinted window blocked the scene within the vehicle. If Jiang Chen saw the person sitting in the passenger seat, he would have been shocked.

The blonde, blue-eyed, gorgeously figured beauty, the same woman that chatted with him yesterday afternoon. The only difference was, the seductive exposed dress changed into a black trench coat, easier for combat.

"This is Silver Fox. Target entered Oesk."

"Roger, this is Vulture. Continue with plan B."

"Understood."

The vibrant red lips carved a mischevious, demon-like smile.

Chapter 142: Of course not

When they entered Oesk's rural area, the road suddenly became rugged. Shambles completed the scenes along the street, at a glimpse, Jiang Chen even had the feeling he was in the apocalypse.

Under the shambles, there were signs of life. The people without homes built temporary tent under the wreckages that were their homes and looked with vicious eyes at the Kane soldiers.

They continued forward as road conditions got even worse.

Nick had to park beside a civilian building to give Makanov a call.

It wasn't long until a soldier with a rifle found them.

"Borris, second lieutenant." The short hair guy saw Jiang Chen and immediately saluted. "General Makanov sent me to greet you."

"Jiang Chen." Jiang Chen told him his name and shook his hand.

The hand was filled with calluses, which told the story that he was an experienced soldier.

He retracted the hand and Borris nodded.

"Please follow me."

He took a black suitcase out of the car and motioned for Jiang Chen and Nick to follow him.

But what they didn't know was that approximately 400 meters away from where they parked, there was a body.

The uniform and equipment were stripped, and the pupil dilated with a daunting blood hole on the forehead.

Armored vehicles and tank wreckages were on the side of the road. It was a crossfire zone.

On the desolate street, a silent girl walked by.

She was covered in black. Her thin lips exposed from under her hood. There was a guitar case behind her back, like a musician strolling across the ruins.

She lifted the sleeve of her right hand, and a watch-like computer flashed faint lights.

That was the EP.

On the screen was a map of the area. Using waves to create tactical maps was one of the unbelievable function of the EP.

Yesterday at this time, she had already walked through the entire

area. The blue dot on the map was the location of the sensor Jiang Chen carried.

"Am I here?" Ayesha mumbled while she walked to the half-torn residential apartment.

"It's really dangerous there. It got struck by a bomb only a few days ago, and it could fall any second." A refugee crawling on the side tried to warn the girl, but the girl only glanced at him before she took out a pistol.

The refugee raised his hand in horror and moved back.

"Leave."

Perhaps he understood Ayesha' English, for the person moved back a few steps. Then, seeing that she had no intention to shoot, he fled right away.

Seeing the irrelevant people leave. She retracted her pistol and carried the guitar box upstairs.

Ayesha agilely moved around the broken stairs as she effortlessly came to the top floor.

Just like what she learned in the virtual reality training system.

She opened the guitar box, took out the sniper rifle parts and

assembled the sniper skillfully.

After some adjustments, Ayesha took out a city camouflage and put it on her back. She lied on the dusty floor and set up the futuristic looking Ghost sniper rifle.

"Ayesha ready," as if she was talking to herself, Ayesha muttered on the ground.

"Mhmm. Wait for my order."

Jiang Chen reached out to touch his ear and moved his wrist closer to his lips to whisper.

Borris walked in front to lead the way. Nick followed and examined the surrounding without words. Jiang Chen looked rather relaxed as if he did not understand that he was in the front line.

The rough, muddy road had wooden boards lined up, two meters tall, along the side of the road, creating a temporary fence. In the forefront, this thing is used to obstruct the sniper's view or unexpected shots.

"How long?" Jiang Chen scanned the tank stalled on the road as he casually asked Borris up front.

"Soon, it's in front," Borris gave a vague answer.

"Oh. Could I ask you a personal question?" Jiang Chen walked up to him and smiled.

"Of course, as long as it doesn't involve sensitive information."

"Your position in the 92nd Mechanized Infantry is?" From the calluses on his hands, this guy must be a great soldier.

"Currently Makanov General's personal guard." Borris' English was fluent. He could understand Jiang Chen's Chinglish, which barely passes level six of the proficiency test.

"Oh? Then you must be a good shooter." Jiang Chen looked at him quite surprised.

"Not bad." Borris didn't seem to want to continue on the topic, but he paused, and then added, "I am his nephew."

The three continued for a bit longer, but at this time, Nick began scanning down the road, raised his eyebrows, and then stopped.

The quiet him abruptly interrupted, "The 92nd mechanized infantry already pushed up this far?"

"Of course not." Borris shrugged and said something the two didn't understand.

Nick had the fastest reaction as he instantly reached for his waist. But Borris, clearly prepared, was one step ahead and pointed his rifle at him.

"I suggest you don't move. Not including the gun in my hand, there is one pointing at you hundreds of meters away," Borris said lightheartedly, but he was looking at Jiang Chen. "Very sorry, Mr. Jiang, someone wants to talk with you."

"Who?" Jiang Chen smiled, with the same lighthearted tone.

Obviously, this Borris was fake. Makanov probably did send someone here but got killed, and then substituted for this Borris?

Although he was prepared for trouble, Jiang Chen didn't expect the trouble to not come from Makanov, but from a force he hasn't met before.

The radio signal must have been intercepted. They are obviously not weak. But even knowing this, Jiang Chen's face remained emotionless as he looked at Borris with a bright smile.

Borris didn't answer Jiang Chen's question as he looked at him slightly shocked. "Mr. Jiang is not worried about your own safety?"

"Safety? Why would I be worried about it?" Jiang Chen pretended to be confused and shrugged. "Since you want to kidnap me, wouldn't you guarantee my safety?"

Borris cracked a smile as he seemed to be intrigued by Jiang Chen logic. Then he raised his left hand and made a gesture.

A few people walked out from the shadows. Their skillful moves along with their professional positioning indicated that these people must be of the special forces.

He looked at the unanimous Russian faces and recalled Nick saying Kane didn't have a special force. Jiang Chen had a sense of the identities of these people.

Nick was tied up, but they were courteous enough not to do the same thing to Jiang Chen. Maybe from appearance, Jiang Chen didn't look like a dangerous figure.

"KGB?" Jiang Chen tried to probe the question as he stared into Borris' eyes.

No wonder he was a professional, his pupils didn't waiver at all. Borris only smiled and didn't respond.

"Who we are is not important, handsome from the east."

With a flirtatious tone, Jiang Chen heard a familiar voice behind him.

The broken Han.

Chapter 143: The Three Musketeers

"It's you?' Jiang Chen looked at the beauty walking towards him in astonishment. The tall figure, blonde, and blue-eyed was the same woman that chatted with him at the hotel.

But the woman didn't respond to his shock as she simply muttered to herself.

"Jiang Chen, male, 25. President of Future Technology, 99% shareholder of the company. Force unknown, suspected of high technology and research capabilities. Initial capital originated from gold, used the American middleman Robert to offload 11.240 tons of gold, the large quantity caused a selloff in the American gold exchange which amounted to a consecutive three-days drop up to 2%."

Hearing the description by this beauty, Jiang Chen was startled.

[Wow, basically they dug up my entire background overseas.]

"Looks like you guys did a great job investigating me." Jiang Chen clapped and stared at her. "And then? What do you plan to get out of me? I am not a scientist, nor a spy, only a businessman. I don't have anything to give you. It would be odd if you are just here for the one million USD worth of gold. You don't look like you lack funding."

"Exactly because you are a businessman." The Kaneian beauty smiled, the eyes in her deep eye sockets gazed at him, "Don't you

think your appearance is unfitting for your identity? Mr. Jiang Chen."

"That's a great point." Jiang Chen nodded while he acted as if he was thinking.

At least, Jobs or Bill Gates would not come to this place.

"Then, could you answer my confusion?" She walked beside Jiang Chen and got slightly closer, half-smiling, she continued, "The reason why you are here."

"Of course, but before that, could I know your name," Jiang Chen cooperatively raised his hands, just like passing through security, he let the graceful looking hands search through his body as he said casually.

"Natasha." She smiled as she didn't find any weapons. She then grabbed his chin, as if teasing him, "Teeth looks clean. I thought Han agents hide poison in their tooth."

"Have you watched too many dramas?" Jiang Chen rolled his eyes, not feeling tense at all. "Also, I am not an agent."

[Natasha? Seems like a popular name.]

Nonchalantly shrugging, Natasha stared into his eyes mischievously. "That's hard to say. Now, what's your reason for coming here? Are you representing yourself, your country? Or, the

force behind you?"

Jiang Chen looked strangely at Natasha as he said helplessly, "Why do you agents always ask this question? I remember an American asking me this before."

"Don't change the subject," Natasha said coldly.

"I choose C."

Natasha paused for a moment as she was surprised by how direct Jiang Chen's response was.

"And then? Even if I say I work for a force, what are you planning to do? I didn't threaten your national security." He made up a story without his heart skipping a beat.

Life is a like a show; it's mainly dependant on one's acting.

"Oh yeah? Then we'll take you to a place. Once we are there, there will be "experts" discussing this problem with you." Natasha slightly moved away from Jiang Chen as she pressed the wireless headphone onto her ear. "Package" is retracted, requesting lift.

"Roger, this is Vulture, M-171 deployed and on its way."

Once the communication ended, she didn't say anything else but looked at Jiang Chen with a smile. What she didn't know was that

the conversation between the guy with the code name "Vulture" was intercepted by the micro communication chip in his ear, it was even translated into Han.

Jiang Chen looked emotionlessly at Natasha, but his mind was spinning quickly.

[Five Russian special forces, or agents. Only Ayesha herself, Nick is being controlled, and it would be impractical to take care of five "experts" altogether.]

He was waiting for an opportunity.

Like how she practiced in the virtual reality training system, Ayesha quietly aimed through the scope.

The center of the cross was Borris' face.

Something unexpected happened as the three of them stopped. Four figures dashed out from the shadows while Jiang Chen's companion was taken as hostage.

Ayesha slightly moved the gun as she aimed at the woman getting closer to Jiang Chen.

When the Kaneian beauty approached Jiang Chen and touched him all over. Ayesha's eyebrows uncontrollably twitched, her delicate finger repeatedly rubbed against the trigger.

The ghost sniper rifle was advanced at every level compared to the technology in this age.

Seeing Jiang Chen was in danger, Ayesha was out of sort. She took a deep breath as she calmly decreased the magnification on the scope, and pressed a button on the side of the rifle.

A line of blue letters appeared on top of the sight.

<Widerange life detection system activated>

Immediately, the blue waves scanned across the field in the scope, and a few red dots were marked. The function was rather useless as most survivors, who had the ability to, would use a life signal jammer to prevent their location from being detected. But in the modern world, without such technology, the function was like cheating.

"Two snipers?" Ayesha raised her eyebrows confused.

300 meters away, there was a sniper in camouflage on top of an apartment building. 1500 meters away, another sniper lied on top of a roof in the factory. Both locked onto the seven people standing on the rural road.

Same force? Didn't look like it.

The two snipers didn't wear anything that revealed their identity.

Ayesha only hesitated for a second before she made the decision.

She put her finger to her ear and said calmly, "Two snipers. Do friendly forces exist?"

Within the sight, she saw Jiang Chen slightly shake his head.

Then, Ayesha asked, "Requesting permission to kill."

Within the cross, Jiang Chen was speaking with Natasha as he nodded.

"Understood."

Ayesha closed the microphone, put her right hand on the rifle again, and positioned her finger on the trigger.

The cross sight moved, and she first locked onto the sniper 300 meters away. The person did not have the slightest sense that he was someone else's prey. He had his eyes locked on the scope.

Typically speaking, snipers would be absolutely safe before they expose themselves by firing. Of course, that was under normal circumstances.

Bang!

The gunshot was faint under the influence of the silencer. The bullet accurately penetrated through the head of the sniper as his skull cracked like a watermelon.

She didn't stop her sight on his body as she quickly aimed at the target 1500 meters out.

Because the distance was relatively far, she opened the wind speed calculation device and adjusted the magnification on the scope.

"Wind speed 4 km/hr, distance 1500 meters," Ayesha murmured as she pulled the trigger again.

Chapter 144: Chaos

"Target down."

A smile emerged on Jiang Chen's face.

For some reason, Natasha felt unsettled by the Asian man's smile.

At the same time, in an underground military facility a thousand meters away.

"Dagger 01 lost connection."

"Are they Russian snipers? Call Guard 01, initiate plan B."

"Guard 01 received. As you wish, commander."

...

The M-171 helicopter appeared in the air. The camouflage green had a frightening vibe to it.

"I remembered that you said in the news that Russian soldiers haven't passed the border." Jiang Chen used a questioning tone.

"NATO said that too. Also, I never said I was Russian." Natasha shrugged. "Take a trip with me. Trust me, if you can prove that

you are only a merchant, we'll let you go."

"What makes you think I believe you?" Jiang Chen shrugged and looked into the sky. "Crossing the border just for me, you are not going to let me go easily."

"But you don't have any other choice," Borris interrupted laughing.

[Don't I?]

Jiang Chen maintained his gaze at 75°, looking at the sky, the violent turbulence forced his eyes to narrow. Then, hiding under the noise of the approaching helicopter's rotor blade, at an angle Natasha couldn't see, he pretended to scratch his ear and opened his mouth.

"Shoot the fuel tank."

"Roger." Ayesha's calm and comforting answer transmitted into his ear.

Bang-!

The bullet hit the fuel tank.

But at the same time, a trail of fire erupted into the air and struck at the helicopter from a building nearby. It simultaneously hit the

helicopter's engine.

Jiang Chen was truly lost seeing what just happened.

[The ghost sniper has a barrel this big?]

"RPG!"

"Dammit!"

Like a mosquito slapped out of the air, the helicopter began to slant and dive unexpectedly to the ground. Natasha's first reaction was Jiang Chen's men as she quickly aimed at Jiang Chen. But at the same time, gunfire suddenly burst out of the wooden shack across the road.

Bullets left a trail of dust and debris on the concrete floor and wooden board.

Jiang Chen dove for cover on the side. The unsuspecting KGB agent under fire also tried to find cover while firing back. But the other side was obviously prepared. They had the advantage in both firepower and number of people.

Natasha gritted her teeth, hooked her arm around Jiang Chen's neck, and hid behind the cover while pulling out the pistol with her other hand.

"Is it your people?"

"No. If it is, why the fu*k am I hiding?" Jiang Chen was also in an awkward position. When the bullet fired over, his also had a daunting feel.

But the feeling he felt on his back did feel good. Umm, the advantage of Slavic people?

"Then shut up." Natasha maintained this flirtatious position while firing back a few shots to test the waters. But immediately, a wave of bullets met her and forced her to take cover.

[What the fu*k, you have been asking the questions!]

"Do you need me to shoot her?" Ayesha's voice transmitted into his ear, her tone sounded subtle.

Jiang Chen immediately shook his head. He hasn't figured out the situation here, if Natasha is down, it would only further complicate the situation. The first thing was to wait for them to finish fighting before taking action.

But with the head shake, the back of his head scratched on something he shouldn't have scratched, Natasha's grim eyes immediately looked over.

"What are you doing?"

"Umm. My neck is feeling weird." Jiang Chen forced an awkward laugh as he glanced at the arm hooked around his neck.

To his surprise, Natasha didn't continue to be angry. Instead, she smiled dubiously.

"Yesterday afternoon, I gave you the opportunity to take advantage of me, now you are interested? Or are you a masochist?"

"Yesterday afternoon? Umm, I am curious, if I agreed, what would you do?"

"Nothing," Natasha's voice was light. "I'll give you a needle when you try to use your needle."

Jiang Chen forced a smile when he heard her words.

[Phew, almost agreed to it.]

He leaned against the softness. While still nervous, he didn't think the feeling was too terrible. Jiang Chen asked Natasha who continually peeked out to fire back, "You seem suppressed by their firepower, are you not worried?"

"Worried?" Natasha looked at him oddly and then scoffed.

The artillery support at the border was not there for decoration.

Just as the voice died, a screeching sound broke across the sky.

Boom-!

The explosion lifted the already torn wooden shack into the sky. The opponent's firepower immediately weakened. Then, a few trails of white smoke flew in the sky. The explosions covered the entire area.

He looked at the chaos as his mouth twitched.

[Damn, not only the border, they even fired over the border.

No wonder they are the Russians.]

"Direct hit, beautiful, say thanks for me to the gunner." Borris held the headphones and moved out of cover.

"Danger alleviated. Get up, handsome." Natasha dubiously smiled, then dragged Jiang Chen by the collar.

"Okay, Yuri, take the Belarussian with us. We'll head to B point to evacuate-"

Bang!

His voice was interrupted, as Borris's cocky expression froze on his face. A daunting blood hole appeared on his chest.

"Sniper! Dammit!"

Natasha pushed Jiang Chen to the ground. The others got into the same position.

"It's not me who shot," Ayesha's voice emerged, "the sniper is directly in front of me, and exceeds my range... Can I shoot the female thug on top of you? This is a good opportunity."

Jiang Chen shook his head with a forced smile, but his nose and mouth were being firmly held by the softness, shaking his head was not the most convenient move.

"This is the second time." He heard a cold voice. Clearly, Natasha was in a terrible mood.

"The second time you pushed me over? I only want to breathe... Let's not talk about this, what should we do? Miss Kidnapper?"

He got away from the softness, neglected the angry face, and said innocently.

"Strawman, strawman please return... Dammit! Strawman died." The Russian man named Yuri cursed angrily.

[Strawman? One of the snipers killed by Ayesha? In that case, two forces are competing.

Goddamn, why am I so popular?] Jiang Chen cursed in this mind.

"Yuri, do you see his position?" Natasha ignored Jiang Chen as she yelled at the cover behind her.

Being suppressed by a sniper was far more frightening than being suppressed by a machine gun. At least you could see the machine gun bullets, but you don't even know where sniper bullets come from.

"Let me try." Yuri gritted his teeth. He signaled his comrade to keep an eye on Nick, who was still tied down and then took out the binoculars, carefully peeking out of the cover.

As long as they marked the sniper's position, an artillery would send him to air!

Bang-!

Red mixed with white, spilled everywhere, without warning.

Chapter 145: Have you seen Mission Impossible 5?

Nick's eyes narrowed, and he used his shoulder to wipe off the blood splashed onto his face. Although his expression remained the same, he was internally shocked. To be able to lock onto a target and fire in two seconds, the sniper's shooting could not get any better.

"Yuri!"

Before the voice faded, another shot was fired.

The bullet accurately penetrated the head that peeked out from the other side of the cover.

Morris wanted to use the opportunity garnered by the commander's life to lock onto the position of the sniper. But the opposing sniper's reaction was unfathomable, as they immediately switched target after the shot, firing without a glimpse of delay.

Natasha's was furious. Within one minute, her team suffered three casualties.

"Dammit, Yuri, Morris down! Captain, we should request assistance!" The other Russian agent beside Nick firmly leaned against the cover and yelled in Natasha's direction.

"We sent out all the help we could. Command center, target x13-y15, requesting smoke bomb launch."

"This is command center, permission granted, smoke bomb launched."

The explosion rang once again as thick gray smoke covered the area. The smoke bomb with thermal reaction meant that even if the enemy was equipped with heat detection scope, it could block their vision.

Natasha let out a breath of air as she carried her rifle and dragged Jiang Chen by the collar, about to get up.

But now, sensing the opportunity was here, Jiang Chen's eyes moved, and he clamped both of her hands. Before Natasha could react, Jiang Chen grabbed both of her hands. In the not most elegant position, she was pushed to the ground.

Seeing the situation, the Russian beside Nick quickly aimed at Jiang Chen.

"Break up the hand." The grim words came out, and Ayesha simultaneously pressed the trigger. The bullet ripped apart the right wrist of the Russian as the horrifying bone was exposed in the air. Before the man could scream out in pain, Nick, who sensed the opportunity, dashed up and slammed him to the ground. With his knees pressed on the arm, Nick used the rope between his hand against the Russian's neck and choked him unconscious.

Seeing as the Russian didn't move anymore, Jiang Chen signaled Nick to treat him and tie him up, before he looked at Natasha again.

The Ukrainian girl riding him had a face full of humiliation as she desperately tried to fight back. Her face was steamy red, but regardless of how much force she used, both of her hands could not escape from Jiang Chen's iron claw.

She couldn't imagine this guy, who identifies as a merchant, could use one hand too tightly clench onto both of her hands. Despite how hard she tried, she could not move the slightest bit.

"Stop, don't waste your energy," Jiang Chen said casually as he looked at the balls, distorted against the concrete floor, with a grin. He then mocked, mimicking her tone, "Third time?"

Seeing as struggling was futile, Natasha decided to stop moving. She turned her face as she used the corner of her eye to angrily stare at Jiang Chen, who was sitting on her waist.

"Did you lock onto the sniper's position?" With one hand clenching Natasha, Jiang Chen used the other hand to touch his ear. He looked like he was speaking to himself.

"Locked on, the target is moving." Although it was outside of her range, that "rat's" life signal was already marked on the map.

"Follow him, try to capture him alive."

"Roger," Ayesha's responded concisely.

Jiang Chen ended their communication and glanced in Nick's direction.

The Russian with a broken hand was tied up and thrown against the wall. Nick overlooked him with a rifle in hand. The man seemed to have gone unconscious because of the lost blood, but that was okay, as long as he didn't die. If it was not needed, Jiang Chen didn't want to be an enemy to the intelligence department of the "Five Thugs." Then, Jiang Chen looked backed at Natasha, looking at her dubiously.

"Now, it's time for me to interrogate you?"

Natasha smiled contemptuously. "You won't get a single word out of my mouth."

"That's not a guarantee." Jiang Chen shrugged as he suddenly smiled mischievously. "Since my people already took care of the sniper, we have plenty of time. Why don't we do something fun."

"I promise it won't be fun." Natasha sneered, her green eyes filled with defiance.

"That depends. Maybe, in the end, you can't even control yourself." Jiang Chen's laugh was pure evil.

Funny, he realized after being injected with the genetic vaccine, not only did his physique improve, the width and hardness did as well. With the help of fury, even Ayesha, who was slightly M, would go insane.

But he obviously was just joking. He was not at the point where he would do it here.

"With you?"

Natasha's contemptuous voice ignited a flame in Jiang Chen's heart.

[I can't take this.]

Jiang Chen was immediately unhappy.

"Do you want to test it out?"

...

On a block 500 meters away.

A slim figure, carrying a sniper rifle, was moving quickly through the street in shambles.

This area was the frontline between the government force and

civil militant. The glass along the street was shattered, and busted tanks and armored vehicles were everywhere on the road. Gunshots could be faintly heard from afar to what seemed like a fairly large scale attack.

She ducked down and maintained her running position. She then looked at her right arm.

The dangling right arm illuminated with light. The radio life detection system synced with the gathered data on the EP map. Right now, the red dot on the map already stopped moving, that sniper must have arrived at the backup sniping point. If she just wanted to kill him, one shot would be enough from such a distance. A sniper with exposed coordinates was as good as died. But to capture him, naturally, she had to get close.

Ayesha was getting closer and closer to the target, her rapid steps started to turn more cautious.

Quickly, her distance with the target was only one street. Ayesha leaned against the wall as she examined from across the street.

It was an abandoned office building. The revolving glass door was cracked with wrecked armored vehicles slammed into the door. Ayesha retrieved the sniper rifle from her back. She looked into the scope and scanned the building.

After confirming the exact location of the target, Ayesha hoisted the pistol by her waist, slowly took a deep breath, and then dashed into the street.

She carefully docked across the shattered door, with light steps, and cautiously sneaked upstairs.

Usually, once sniper is in position, their awareness to their surrounding decreased to null. For snipers that worked alone, mines and traps were pretty much a must.

She carefully followed the safety tunnel to the fifth floor. At the corner of the hallway, she stopped.

She stopped, let out a sigh, grabbed an EMP grenade from her pocket, and slid it out after detonation.

Static noise.

...

Ayesha held the pistol, turned around, and continued to the fifth-floor door. At the door, a mine sat there. But the infrared emitter on top was destroyed by the EMP. She stepped over the no longer functioning mine, with agile steps, and sneaked to the end of the tunnel.

Vasily quietly laid on the ground with eyes locked on the scope. Based on the image from the drone, the four people didn't leave. Instead, under cover of the smoke, they went into a shack not too far away.

The plot's progression surprised him. The command center explicitly stated to capture, took down the KGB agent in one move. The intelligence department said he was just an ordinary person?

An average person that could take down an agent with one move?

Regardless, he was still there. As long as he maintained his position on the sniper, he only needs to wait for reinforcement, and take them as hostages.

But for some reason, his felt unsettled.

Suddenly, someone kicked him in the butt.

He immediately flinched. The moment he turned around, he also reached for his pistol. But before he could, a black shadow covered his entire vision.

The headphones dropped to the side. Ayesha emotionlessly looked at the bloodstain on the gun barrel, and then at the Russian with his nose smashed.

"Dagger 02, Dagger 02, report your status-"

Ayesha crushed the headphone as she took out handcuffs and cuffed the unlucky guy.

She opened the mic.

"Target retracted."

...

"Beautiful, drag him over here." A smile emerged on Jiang Chen's face, but that smile in the eyes of Natasha was eviler than the devil himself.

The sniper was captured. Interrogation should get out some useful information from him. But Jiang Chen was still curious as to how he drew the interest of the KGB.

He looked at the Natasha, tied up on the ground, as he gave her a friendly smile.

But the friendly expression did not receive the same recognition from her.

Natasha used the same grim look and stared back at him.

"Don't look at me like that." Jiang Chen shrugged as he tried to defend his action. "I said I am just a businessman, but you stick to me like flies. Did I bother you or trouble you?"

"Fly? What do flies like to stick to?" Natasha sneered.

Jiang Chen first stopped, then laughed.

"Are you trying to enrage me? Is there any benefit to you for doing so?"

Natasha bit her lip, not responding. The blond hair on her forehead was a bit messy. In her deep eye socket was a pair of piercing eyes. The vibe was certainly there. The look of, regardless of anything you do, I won't say anything.

This made Jiang Chen troubled. To be honest, he personally didn't enjoy use force on beauty.

He sighed and said, "In my opinion, you should just cooperate. Tell me who you represent? Why do you need me? For what? And then I'll let you go. Such simple concepts. Although I am not an agent, I have seen entire Hollywood blockbusters and war dramas. Even if I haven't seen an interrogation before, at least I could try to use a thing or two. If I accidentally don't control my force, then you-"

"Do you think I am scared of death?" Still the contemptuous tone.

Mission outside of the border without the grant of the United Nations. For the glory of the country, even if she dies, she would not admit her identity.

Jiang Chen stopped again, gave it some thought, and nodded while scratching his chin.

"Not a bad point."

He can't kill her. Jiang Chen didn't plan to make enemies with the KGB.

But how would he get the information out of her?

Suddenly, Jiang Chen clapped his hands as if he thought of something. Then, he smiled at Natasha with a not so friendly smile.

"What are you smiling at?" Natasha felt uncomfortable.

"Nothing. But speaking of which, have you seen <Mission Impossible 5>?"

Chapter 146: The Secret

Within a dark room.

Natasha's pupils dilated as she sat awkwardly on the chair. Her limbs were tied firmly onto the armrests and chair legs.

Jiang Chen glanced at her and sneered a few times.

Don't be mistaken. Although he did say he wanted her to "try", Jiang Chen didn't actually do anything to her. Instead, he asked Ayesha to come and guard the door. He then walked into an inner room and went back to the apocalypse.

He sent a message to Zhou Guopin, who stationed in the Sixth Street, and asked him to find out if there was any truth-telling liquid. To be honest, Jiang Chen wasn't too confident about medicine from sci-fi movies existing in the future. But when he heard his boss' question, Zhou Guopin stated that it did exist and promised that he would send it over after he purchased it.

Jiang Chen sat in the community center for a bit as he took the truth-telling liquid from the meticulous Zhou Guopin. After sending him back, Jiang Chen returned to the modern world.

The trip back and forth took four hours. The sky was already darkening.

Nick still stood outside, guarding without complaint, while

Ayesha also stood her ground at the door, coldly exchanging eye contact with Natasha.

What happened after was simple.

Natasha's contempt was better than Lin Lin's. Her resilience was also hundreds of times stronger, keeping her mouth shut.

But Jiang Chen didn't waste time with her. In front of her, he slowly took out a needle from his pocket.

"Have you heard about the truth-telling liquid? The one in <Mission Impossible 5>."

Natasha's face immediately changed as she desperately twisted her back to resist. Without any other solutions, Jiang Chen had to forcefully tie her onto the chair to sit her down. Then, he looked at her frightened expression pleasingly.

[Scared? What happened to the earlier you?]

He personally loved to put things in beauty's bodies.

To be fair, the truth-telling liquid was pretty useless in the apocalypse.

Based on what Zhou Guopin said, the principle of this was to force the target's brain into hypnosis, while only being able to

perform simple information receiving and answering. But in the apocalypse, even the survivors injected with the cheap E-grade genetic vaccine would not be hypnotized by this kind of medicine.

But in the modern world, using this thing was just unfair.

After being injected, Natasha was much more honest. Jiang Chen would ask a question, and she would reply with an answer drowsily. Then, the sniper also had an injection, and after combining the responses of both people, Jiang Chen finally understood the story from beginning to end.

But the truth felt heavy.

Willie Society, a mysterious organization established before the Second World War, was created by the German politician Scholar Karl Haus Haufer. Its members included Herman, Himmler and even Hitler himself. Based on rumors, a lot of the obscure technology came from there. At the same, the organization committed a lot of sinful activities during the war. After the war, it disappeared into thin air, as if it didn't exist at all.

But that was not the key point. The key point was that the organization still existed even today? And within Kane? The new president Poroshenko was also a member? NATO allowed for its existence?

It was a hefty piece of news, but he tied what he saw in the news before, Azerbillari soldiers of the Mariupuer force had the Nazi symbol painted on their helmets, as well as the Kane soldier with

the Nazi symbol attached to their arms, and began to think.

The information was from Natasha.

KGB's spy activity in Kane was mostly spent on the mysterious organization called Willie Society. It differed from what Jiang Chen had suspected. He thought the Russian agents were coming for him because of the artificial intelligence, but it was an obscure reason. The only reason Natasha found him was because of a phone call.

Half a month ago, when KGB was tapping Poroshenko's confidant - General Markanov, they by chance got an interesting message.

A man named Robert called him.

Three keywords, "Jiang Chen, Gold, Mercenaries".

By coincidence, around one year ago, when Robert didn't touch the Iran oil and simply played the middleman role diligently, he was in charge of selling firearms to the Kane government on behalf of the White House. At that time, he was successfully put onto the blacklist of KGB, and KGB did initiate a civil militant-led attack targeting him. If it were not for the Slavic man who could fight, he would have been done for.

Then, after Robert left Kane, his name naturally came off of the blacklist. But Natasha didn't expect to see that name again. After some investigation, Jiang Chen's resume was put into her hands.

But his history was too clean. Clean to the point that it was unbelievable.

Therefore, the moment Jiang Chen got off the plane, he was monitored.

Markanov is a member of the Willie society. KGB wants to know the intention behind Jiang Chen's contact with him.

The original plan was for Natasha to try and hit on Jiang Chen, inject anesthetics when they entered the room, then transport him out of the hotel through special means, and interrogate at the safe house.

But what she didn't expect was that Jiang was not as perverted as the information said, as he rejected her proposition. So she had to ask for permission to start plan B, which was, once Jiang Chen left Veit, intercept him once they reached Oesk.

The further they drove east, the more advantageous the situation was for them.

But unfortunately, KGB was not the only ones interested in Jiang Chen. Willie Society was also confused by the man from the east attempting to contact Markanov. It was okay when it was Robert since he represented the US, but they questioned Jiang Chen's identity.

Also, he belonged to a mysterious organization?

They couldn't find a single piece of information related to the force behind him. They could deduce from current information that Jiang Chen belonged to an organization with unknown motive, unknown location, but strong research and development capabilities and substantial funding.

As to Jiang Chen himself, just like KGB, they only managed to find a "resume" as good as scrap paper.

It looked fake no matter how they interpreted it.

Uhh, although Jiang Chen wanted to state that the piece of paper was real.

The intelligence always over thought. So he'll leave them to their imagination.

They also started to monitor Jiang Chen when he got off the plane. But during monitoring, they found an interesting person - Natasha, KGB agent.

The Willie agent was immediately unsettled when they saw the contact between Jiang Chen and KGB, but they didn't alert them. Because it was a great opportunity! Not including Jiang Chen himself, if they operated correctly, they could even take out all the Russian agents behind Natasha!

So, they also patiently waited for Jiang Chen to arrive at Oesk,

and waited for the Russians to make the first move.

...

To put it in simple terms, he was targeted by the two troubling groups, Willie Society and KGB. As long as he was in Kane, he would not be able to get rid of these troubles.

"Are you okay?" Ayesha looked at Jiang Chen caringly.

"Yeah, keep an eye on her for me." Jiang Chen rubbed his temple wearily as he headed outside.

Outside the shack, Nick was patrolling with his rifle. Seeing Jiang Chen walk towards him, he waved to say hi.

"How's the situation?"

"Everything is normal. The Russain special force seemed to have headed to our previous location. They rescued the pilot."

"Not a big deal. Do you have a satellite phone? I need to discuss with that dumb*ss Robert." Their location was far away from the crash. They wouldn't be able to find them here.

Nick smiled, took out the satellite phone, and threw it into Jiang Chen's hand.

Right now, Robert was in a distant land across the Atlantic ocean. Lying relaxingly in his Los Angeles mansion, enjoying the lavish life. Beside him lied a girl "lost in life", ready to discuss her Hollywood dream with him the entire night.

But in this critical moment, the phone on the nightstand suddenly rang.

Although he was unwilling, he saw the caller was Jiang Chen. He immediately picked up.

"Hello? Did you meet my old friend?"

"Meet your mom!" Jiang Chen was instantly frustrated when he heard Robert's cheerful voice, and cursed, "Who the hell is your old friend? The moment I got off the plane, I got monitored by two agent organizations."

Robert held the phone, momentarily lost for words. He asked with confusion in his voice, "What?"

Jiang Chen adjusted his emotion as he let out a sigh. Then he slowly said, "KGB, Willie Society."

Robert's face immediately changed. He ignored the Hollywood girl beside him, got out of the bed, and walked to the living room covering his phone.

"How did you mess with the KGB? And, what is Willie society?"

Robert said anxiously.

Robert didn't even know? Jiang Chen was surprised.

"Have you not heard about them when you were in Kane? It seems to be an organization with roots starting in the Second World War, with the Nazis... Dammit! What is this bullsh*t? Your old friend, Markanov, appears to be a Willie Society member."

Then, Jiang Chen stated the information he got with truth-telling liquid again.

Hearing Jiang Chen's description, Robert's expression turned serious.

"I always thought it was a rumor... But I can't believe they actually exist."

"Yes, they do, but what the fu*k does it have to do with me? I just want to know, how am I going to leave Kane? If I got back to , I would be captured. The same will happen if I head to the east towards Russia. Do I need to swim across the Black Sea? This is bullsh*t," Jiang Chen swore.

"Wait, let me think." Robert closed his eyes, and then suddenly opened them, "Did you kill them?"

He referred to the Russian agents.

"No, I tied them up," Jiang Chen took a deep breath and said slowly.

"Good. There are still ways to resolve this... How about selling the two Russian agents to the CIA? I know someone working in Kane."

"F*ck you," Jiang Chen burst out, "Your friend again?"

Robert was quite helpless too and revealed a bitter face. "Umm... There is nothing I can do. Who knew Markanov has an identity like this? Dammit, when I sold him firearms before, I didn't care who he was. For real, buddy, sell the people to CIA. They will send helicopters to pick you up and send you to their aircraft carrier."

"And?"

"They should let you off at Greece, and then arrange for your tickets home."

"That's fine. I'll think of other ways." Jiang Chen hung up the phone.

Nick took the phone from Jiang Chen and asked, "Did Robert think of something?"

"He is dumber than before," Jiang Chen cursed and returned to

the shack.

[You must be kidding me, getting involved with the CIA again? There is not enough trouble already?]

Willie Society is okay since they should only be operating in Kane. KGB is fine too since this is not a Soviet era.

But if CIA were interested in you, they would take American's taxpayer money to chase your butt around the world.

He pushed open the door, and Jiang Chen saw Ayesha working on the scope of the rifle.

Jiang Chen adjusted his emotion as he tried to force a relaxed look. Then, he said with a smile, "What are you doing?"

Seeing Jiang Chen was back, Ayesha smiled gently at him.

"Doing maintenance on the gun. Exporting video footage."

[Video footage?]

He hesitated for a moment before his eyes lit up.

[I have a solution now!]

Chapter 147: The Perfect Solution

When Natasha woke up drowsily from passing out, she struggled to open her sore eyes.

When she realized her current circumstance, a fierce look was targeted towards Jiang Chen, who was sitting directly across from her.

"What did you do to me?" Obviously, she didn't have any memories after being injected with the truth-telling liquid.

Her clothes were distorted with hands tied to the armrest, and feet locked to the chair legs. A male and a female in a room together. There was a lot of room for the imagination.

"Nothing." Jiang Chen shrugged with a smile on his face. "I am an innocent person."

Psh!

Natasha cursed in her mind as she looked at Jiang Chen without saying a word.

"KGB."

Jiang Chen spoke, but Natasha's expression did not change at all. As long as she doesn't admit it, what could he do to her?

Seeing Natasha's look of defiance, Jiang Chen smiled, put a smartphone on the table, and pressed play.

"I am from the KGB..."

"The purpose of your trip in Kane?"

"To conduct intelligence, gather and provide intelligence for civil militants..."

Questions and answers. The male's voice was obviously Jiang Chen's; the female was Natasha's.

Natasha's face turned pale as she violently twisted her body to free herself and grab the phone. Seeing the girl's action, Jiang Chen only shrugged and pressed the screen a few more times.

"Before you calm down, I'll to show you something even more interesting."

He ignored Natasha's deathly stare as Jiang Chen picked the phone up and played the video.

The video's quality was high. The perspective was from a scope. In the video, there was an M-171 Russian Helicopter. Then, the screen shook, Ayesha fired. At the same time, an RPG hit the helicopter.

The helicopter went out of balance and crashed. Then, what looked like Kane's special forces began to fire at the group. Of course, it was a joke that Kane has a special force.

Right after, Borris in the front called for artillery support, and a few shells covered the entire area, sending the group of soldiers flying.

Then it was Borris being shot in the chest. Then the Yuri guy being shot in the head, followed by Morris. Then, it was Ayesha that broke another Russian agent's hand, but that part was cut.

Natasha's expression was pale as she stopped struggling.

"I trust that you know what would happen if this video appeared on YouTube or other sites. Unauthorized military action in foreign countries. Artillery stationed in the border launching strikes against foreign targets. The video's resolution is much better than the American's satellite. I remember that the White House didn't even capture images of you guys firing. Would this in my hand be considered big news? Just so you know, I also intercepted the communication requesting for artillery." Jiang Chen smiled delightfully.

There was not a single trace of redness on Natasha's face. She knew exactly what kind of severe consequence would result if the video was uploaded.

"Give me the video."

"No." Jiang Chen smiled.

"You'll be hunted by KGB agents," Natasha threatened.

"If something happens to me, the video will automatically be sent out. You will get nothing out of it," Jiang Chen's fingers crossed as he said this, not caring.

Natasha was silent. Then she changed into a flirtatious expression.

"If you are willing to give it to me, I will give you some unexpected services."

Ayesha standing by the door glanced at her, the emotionless face looked rather daunting.

"Are you not going to ask your little soldier to leave? I will make you really comfortable." Natasha was a different person, the eyes in her deep eye sockets were charming.

To be honest, Jiang Chen was feeling a little hard.

"I'll pass. Who knows how many people have you done. I would rather pay," Jiang Chen closed his eyes to avoid showing any fluctuations in his emotions, hiding his awkwardness. He then continued, "Also, she is not a soldier, she is my wife."

Hearing that, Ayesha's eyes opened wide. Mist flickered in her eyes. Natasha glanced at the "touched" girl and continued to look at Jiang Chen with a smile.

"That might not be true. I am still pure."

"Who would believe it? Stop with this nonsense, let's make a deal," Jiang Chen, annoyed, spoke. He was afraid that he wouldn't be able to resist the temptation after being firm on his stance for so long.

"Deal? You think you are worthy enough to make a deal with the country?" Natasha's eyes cooled down as she narrowed them.

"Country? Nah, I'm only making a deal with your intelligence minister," Jiang Chen ignored Natasha's contemptuous expression and said straightforwardly. "If the video appears on the Internet, the political career of your minister is over. Someone must take the blame for this."

"Then?"

"As long as we pretend it doesn't exist." Jiang Chen shrugged and looked at Natasha. "I'll let you and the sucker with the broken hand go. We both kidnapped each other so we can say we are even. If you dare to retake action on me, I'll release the video. If you want the video not to exist, then just don't bother."

"Do you think we'll leave a piece of evidence like this in someone else's hands?' Natasha burst out laughing.

"Think about it." Jiang Chen also laughed, "You guys know that I have a mysterious organization behind me. I already said I am willing to resolve this peacefully, why are you giving me trouble? You want to cause a whole bunch of trouble and lose your job, or remain silent and pretend I don't exist. The choice is in your hands. I can give you back your communication device now. Why don't you have a chat with your superior?"

Natasha eyes slightly shook, finally letting out a sigh.

"Okay."

What happened next was what Jiang Chen had expected. The KGB head named Bart accepted this deal without hesitation.

First, the two parties conflict was resolved. KGB will no longer take action, and he will leave Kane in three days, keeping the video content a secret. If the video is leaked, KGB will be sent out agents to assassinate him.

As to KGB's threat, Jiang Chen only shrugged and didn't overthink it.

Also, Jiang Chen provided a USB to Natasha with the interrogation results of the sniper.

Natasha would take his achievement back to her country, receive a promotion, and then sit within the office. Since her identity was already exposed, it would no longer be suitable for foreign missions. Jiang Chen's USB gave Bart the reason to promote her and also gave her a price to shut her mouth.

The mission will be recorded as Natasha and her team engaged in heavy combat with Willie Society's controlled force, with the team suffering heavy casualties but obtained critical intelligence.

As to Jiang Chen's existence, it will be hidden.

Although Bart, the old cunning fox, suggested to Jiang Chen to transfer the sniper to the Russian side, Jiang Chen refused.

He had other uses for this sniper.

Jiang Chen didn't insist since the interrogation report was already comprehensive with everything they needed. But in the voice recording, the sniper often answered right away, without hesitation, which was quite obscure. The frail voice of the guy probably meant that he suffered some gruesome torture.

When the communication ended, Jiang Chen untied Natasha.

She moved her sore body as she gave Jiang Chen an ambiguous look. "You are brilliant. From what I know, you are the first foreigner to have come to an agreement with Bart."

Jiang Chen shrugged. "It did match the interest of both parties. This ending is not bad for you or me, right?"

To be honest, where he got the idea was from the dumbass Robert. Except compared to him, Jiang Chen was attempting something bigger.

"Fair. Although, you are playing with fire. Where is Jager?" Natasha spoke as she extended her hand.

"The guy with a broken hand? In the other room." Jiang Chen passed the USB to her.

Before she left, Natasha still looked cautiously at the smartphone on the table.

Inside contained videos that could affect Russia's image. It could even be used as an excuse to start a new wave of economic sanctions.

As long as she destroyed it...

But she also noticed that the quiet girl had her eyes locked onto her. She had the feeling that if she dared to make a move, the girl would instantly pull the trigger.

"Not leaving? Going to miss me? Jiang Chen smirked.

Natasha smiled charmingly, "Are you really not going to reconsider my proposal? To be honest, I figured that you don't look as weak as I thought. It doesn't seem to be too bad to use you as my first."

Ayesha didn't say anything but maintained the same emotionless expression. Though her vibe was becoming more and more dangerous?

"The negotiation is already over. If it is a personal invitation, maybe I'll say yes at a different time?" Jiang Chen rejected smoothly.

Natasha giggled and didn't respond. She then headed straight to the door.

"When you have the chance to come to Moscow, don't forget to tell me. You suffered through a lot. I'll have to buy you a drink."

"Of course," Jiang Chen laughed as he said to her shadow lightheartedly.

...

Natasha left with Jager. Then, Jiang Chen's group took the unconscious sniper to a different location.

Under the disguise of the darkness, they traversed through the battlefield to an isolated community.

After going inside an abandoned apartment building, making sure they were not being followed, Jiang Chen woke the tied up sniper.

"Vasily?"

Vasily didn't say anything. He quietly looked at Jiang Chen. He didn't know under the influence of the truth-telling liquid, he has already exposed all of his secrets.

"I heard that snipers usually have great patience, right?" Jiang Chen said lightheartedly.

"Then you should know, interrogation means nothing to me," The Slavic looking man stared at Jiang Chen, answering coldly.

Nick stood on the side and translated it into English. Then he looked at Jiang Chen.

Seeing as Vasily didn't say anything, Jiang Chen continued, "I don't plan on interrogating you, I only want to ask you for some contact information... Umm, how should I say this? I want to do a deal with the organization behind you."

Chapter 148: Mercenary

Honestly speaking, Jiang Chen did not care about the goddamn place known as Kane. He only wanted to buy some experienced soldiers and train a mercenary force loyal to him to complete his "island capture" plan. But at the moment, he was tricked by the dumbass Robert's information, Makanov's hidden identity made the situation much more complicated.

Because of the KGB agents, as well as the Willie Society agents going head to head, he was forced into this hidden conflict.

The fortunate part was, all these problems were resolved.

Whatever conspiracy the Willie society had, KGB can worry about it.

He walked with Makanov' along the 92nd mechanized infantry base as the two chatted together.

Nick followed behind them because Makanov's English was not too bad, so he didn't even need to translate. He just continued to walk along in his usual silence. As to Ayesha, Jiang Chen stationed her in the distance, just in case.

Although they were not in the most dangerous area, it was considered the frontline. The conditions here were quite harsh. The soldiers would usually sleep by the dug trench, the wooden boxes used to store ammo were used as tables, they sat around eating cold canned food, chewing black bread.

Seeing the soldiers' living condition, it was not even comparable to the survivors in the Fishbone base. Jiang Chen had the illusion that he was too generous.

"There's plenty of great guys here at the 92nd mechanized infantry. If you see anyone you like, let me know. I'll chat with them. Of course, as long as he is not too dumb, he won't reject the offer." Markanov laughed.

Seeing the general finally coming to the front line to check them, a lot of the listless soldiers regained their focus and saluted when he walked by.

Seeing the soldiers, Jiang Chen was skeptical if they could actually defend against the civil force's attack. But his face remained expressionless.

"Oh? If I take the aces from your force, are you not going to get a heartache?" Jiang Chen half-jokingly said.

The man has a pointed nose and sharp sight, with a faint scar the side of his face. He looked like he had a fit physique. At a glance, Jiang Chen couldn't relate him to a corrupt official that sold national assets.

He was also the confidant of the new president.

"What's there to have a heartache about?" Markanov shrugged

and laughed. "What if you give me 100 aces, would they beat the "volunteers" from Russia? The outcome of the war never swayed towards us from the beginning. Let's not talk about that. Let's speak of something more practical. My own salary has been held back for a few months already. If I don't sell equipment, how would I pay the people under me?"

He didn't say anything. The gold worth one million USD was enough for him to spend the rest of his life comfortably in any country. So what if he is a confidant of Poroshenko? He had too many confidants. This guy didn't care about being alive or dead. Once he has the money, he doesn't care about what this god forbidden place would turn into.

Jiang Chen didn't respond.

Before he came, he already came to an agreement with Willie society.

He would leave Kane within three days. The purpose of the trip was to hire some mercenaries as bodyguards. The deal was personal. Although he did have an undisclosed organization behind him, they had no intention of stepping into Kane's mess.

The sniper he captured would be returned after he safely leaves the country. If something unexpected happened to him in the next three days, the sniper's location would automatically be sent to Russia. The hostage would be transferred to the Russian side.

Vasily didn't know he was injected with truth-telling liquid.

Willie society, therefore, wouldn't know part of their information was already leaked to the Russian side. Therefore, there would still be value in the sniper.

Hence, to prevent anything unexpected from happening to Jiang Chen in the next three days, Willie society even sent a few agents to protect him, in case the KGB secretly want to cause interference. But clearly, they overcomplicated the situation as Jiang Chen already reached an agreement with KGB. Even if there were still agents following him from afar, they would not make a move.

"Other than soldiers, do you need a tank? AT-64. I'll sell it to you for one million USD."

"Tank? Where would I even put that?" Jiang Chen jokingly cursed.

[You must be joking. You think I don't know that that's the historic remains from the Soviet? 400 T-64s lie in the tank graveyard at Kharkov with who knows how thick of dust covering them. It would be a miracle to find one that is still moving. Those things were scraps that even the steel factory wouldn't want.]

He followed the trench to the empty ground. Markanov and a second in command looking person exchanged a few words in whispers. Then, he grabbed two chairs and sat with Jiang Chen, smiling.

The 92nd mechanized infantry soldiers were interviewed in groups, with Nick the veteran making the call. Jiang Chen only sat

on the side, doing some simple verification. To prevent agents from other organizations, he would only need to use some truth-telling liquid to ask them a few questions later.

After around two hours, they finally finished the troublesome process.

Kane had no special forces, but there were still a few experienced soldiers with skills comparable to special forces mixed in. Mostly comprised of Khanstanese, they were natural warriors with superior individual combat ability.

Their equipment was taken off, and Jiang Chen took the group of soldiers already removed from the force to an abandoned warehouse two kilometers away. Jiang Chen signaled Nick to translate.

"I know you must have a lot of questions in mind, such as being forced to join the army and then somehow removed from the force," Jiang Chen stood on top of a broken shipping container and yelled at the lost soldiers.

"You already shed enough blood for your home country. Regardless if it is still worthy of your allegiance, you all did an excellent job. Now, we should talk about something practical."

"A ten-year work contract, and a salary of one hundred thousand USD a year. Fight for me, not the Poroshenko who can't even pay you," Jiang Chen said firmly as he scanned the eyes, filled with differing thoughts.

Like a rock thrown into the middle of a tranquil lake, the soldiers all began to discuss. Jiang Chen patiently waited for them to come up with a result. No matter who, the decision that would change their lives would make people unsettled and lost.

"How do we know you are telling the truth? People in Veit tricked us to the front line, and we had a pity 1500 hryvnia last month. We didn't even get paid anything this month."

"So what's your plan?" Jiang Chen spoke calmly.

"Leave here, to Poland, since my name is already removed. Thank god," the soldier said without hesitation.

"If you see these things, do you still have the same plan?" Jiang Chen shrugged and signaled Nick to take out the suitcase.

The suitcase opened.

Filled with stacks of USD bills. Instantly, everyone held their breath.

"This is private work. You fight for me, and I'll pay your salary. Poland? You become a refugee without dignity in another country. Utilize your only strength with me. Work for ten years, take your saving and enjoy the rest of your life in any country. The opportunity is right in front you, and the door is behind you. To stay or to leave, you guys can decide." After saying this, Jiang Chen

patiently looked at them and stopped saying anything.

Ten years! One million?!

Not even one million, they haven't even you seen ten thousand Franks stacked together.

The soldiers erupted, but no one wanted to leave. They were still skeptical of Jiang Chen's generous offer.

"Can I ask a question?" Finally, a middle-aged man with a rigid face stepped out and tried to ask a question.

"Of course," Jiang Chen examined the person and said nonchalantly.

"My name is Ivan," Ivan courteously stated his name, then said with a firm tone, "Before accepting your offer, can we know where we will be serving?"

"Africa, training mercenaries for me," Jiang Chen answered straightforwardly.

When they heard that they were not being dragged to an unstable area as cannon fodder, they looked more relieved.

Even with a lot of money, they had to be alive to spend it.

"Another question. How are you planning to pay our salary? A lot of us have family here-"

Jiang Chen interrupted him as he waved his hand in dominating fashion, "Cash, transfer, whatever you want. Paid every half a year. I only have one requirement. Your contribution must be worthy of your salary. The conditions I gave must be met."

He paused, Jiang Chen scanned these people, and then continued, "I know a lot of you have a family. You can choose to move them to the family area at the base, or you can opt to leave them here, or whatever. I'll prepay ten thousand in salary. I want all of you to show up at Boris Boer International Airport three days later. If someone runs away with this ten thousand USD-"

Said in a cheerful voice, "Then wouldn't that be embarrassing for me? The remaining nine hundred thousand USD will be the bounty for your head."

When Nick explained Jiang Chen's last words, everyone gasped.

Not because of the threat, but rather the Eastern boss was willing first to pay them ten thousand for their families?

He could not be more compassionate!

With such a genuine offer, who would leave? If someone did, they definitely had their head kicked before.

Seeing no one posed any objections, Jiang Chen indicated to Nick to take out the contract. Once they signed, they could receive ten thousand USD in cash as money for family accommodation.

After everything was taken care of, Jiang Chen immediately dismissed them.

"You are quite generous." Nick smiled, as he gave the suitcase with nine hundred thousand USD back to Jiang Chen.

"Haha. Are you interested in working for me? I'll give you one million in salary." Jiang Chen laughed.

Nick shook his head.

Jiang Chen expected his response, that was a joke.

"Although Robert's head is pretty abnormal, he has his ways of looking after people," Jiang Chen passed him a cigarette and jokingly cursed.

Nick grabbed the cigarette as he lit it up.

"Are you not smoking?" He raised his eyebrows and blew a ring.

"Here and there, but rarely now." Jiang Chen shook his head, touched his ear, and alerted Ayesha, "Mission complete, come back."

"Okay."

After being injected with the genetic vaccine, he was no longer addicted to smoking. The powerful metabolic process meant that the toxins built up in his body would be eliminated through his digestive system. Precisely speaking, even if he constantly smoked, it would not affect his health.

He could smoke freely now, but there was no reason anymore, so naturally, he stopped.

Before it was a way to alleviate stress, but now, life seemed to be good?

Just a bit busy.

"What's next? What are you planning to do for the next three days?" Nick asked casually.

He laughed, as Jiang Chen took out a stash of bills and stuffed them into his hands.

"This is your bonus. Finally came out of the country, how could I not enjoy myself?"

Nick cracked a smile as he didn't reject the money. Then he looked at the slim figure walking through the door.

Black cape, while holding a sniper rifle. It looked comical against her size.

"Spend time with your girl?" Nick mocked him.

"Mhmm." A rare softness appeared on Jiang Chen's face as he looked at Ayesha in the distance. "Time to make it up to her."

Chapter 149: Vacation in Veit

Bright sun, blue sky.

This is Veit, not Oesk hundreds of kilometers away. Chaos has yet to taint the clear sky. With industrial regression, it created a country with air quality far superior to China, whether that was considered lucky or not.

Crowds passed through the Veit Independent Square, but it was not noisy. Last year, there were a few protests at the beautiful square, and quite a few people died. Maybe that had enough of an impact that individuals who were walking around the square were silent as their condolences. With only the occasional shouting here and there, slowly driving away the haze that was left behind.

There were a lot of beauties on the street. It was the first time Jiang Chen experienced the words "beauty infested."

Because of the unique geographical location, excluding Southwest of Crimea, which was along the black sea bank that possessed subtropical climate, most of the area had a mild continental climate. The winter was long, and summer was short. Along with lower than average daylight exposure, the people here naturally had paler skin. With the fact that it was located at the border of Europe and Asia, the multi-ethnicity allowed them to have quite a significant advantage in the gene pool.

Of course, Jiang Chen's eyes didn't stay on the gorgeous looking Ukranian girls because he was in the middle of a date.

...

Independent Square, below the Central Memorium Post, a girl with a slightly stiff expression looked at the camera.

"Relax, smile... Hey! Don't be so shy." As Jiang Chen said that, his eyebrows twitched unnaturally. He felt like a weird uncle trying to lure a small loli.

"This dress is so light. It feels weird." Ayesha unnaturally pulled at her skirt, her pale face covered by a red glare. She vision escaped from the lens, as she coyly looked at her feet.

"No, no, no, it's cute, relax... Look at the camera." Jiang Chen used all his words to convince Ayesha to not be so shy as he finally caught a glimpse of a beautiful scene. Just as Ayesha shyly looked up, he pressed the shutter.

Snap!

"Phew, finally done." Jiang Chen wiped the sweat off of his forehead as he let out a relieved sigh.

Seeing that they finished taking photos, Ayesha immediately ran to Jiang Chen's side. Although she still felt embarrassed by posing in front of a camera, by her eagerness, she naturally looked interested in how the photo turned out.

Seeing Ayesha's look of expectation, Jiang Chen smiled.

"Don't worry, it's beautiful," He called out the picture he just took.

She stared at herself in the photo as her eyes began to light up.

"This, this really is me?" Her voice was filled with disbelief as her finger lightly touched the screen.

The slim and graceful figure, the delicate and pale face, and the softly curled brown hair didn't lack liveliness. The slight, shy expression along with the gem-like eyes was a compromise of both innocence and mystery.

The black dress hanged to the knee with a black bow tie placed at the waist, and a pair of thin stripe sandals to match. The elegant black rose blossomed a mysterious but adorable vibe.

The background wasn't relevant anymore.

"Of course, it's my Ayesha." Jiang Chen put the camera down as he rubbed her long hair with a smile.

Although still slightly embarrassed, Ayesha buried her head down. She was still not used to displaying affection in public. But if it were in their home, she wouldn't be embarrassed even in a bikini.

But suddenly, a piercing grim look flashed across her eyes.

"Something is following us," Ayesha lowered her voice as she walked towards the crowd.

"Don't overreact. Of course, I know." Jiang Chen tugged on Ayesha's hand and stopped her from going to the crowd.

She tilted her head as she was confused by Jiang Chen's reaction.

"Ahem, aren't we on a date?"

When she heard the word "date," Ayesha suddenly noticed her hand was being held, and the pale face suddenly turned to a shade of dark red as if blood was about to drip out any second.

"Do we really need to care about them?" Her finger twisted around the tip of her dress as she quickly whispered.

"No." Jiang Chen smiled brightly, as he openly turned around and scanned the crowd. "Just let these dumb*sses work over time, we'll enjoy our vacation."

Without the need to think, at least two parties were following him. But so what? He only wanted to take Ayesha around for the next two days, temporarily forgetting the bothersome troubles, and enjoy his vacation.

A reward for himself, and compensation to Ayesha.

Watching the side of Ayesha's face, Jiang Chen always felt guilty. In her best years, she was supposed to enjoy her youth, but she had to carry a weapon for him. Although from a different but equivalent perspective, he saved her. Therefore, he shouldn't feel guilty about her doing this.

But he always thought that if he did think that way, that was not man-like.

Sensing Jiang Chen's gaze, Ayesha turned around, innocently but gently smiled.

"Where are we going to go next?"

Holding his hand, Ayesha gently shook it. She started to enjoy this feeling, walking with the love of her life, and the happiness of the warmth surrounding her hand.

"I'll take you to buy some clothes." Jiang Chen gently squeezed her hand and smiled.

"Clothes? But I already have plenty..." Ayesha whispered. In her eyes, it was enough to have a few to change into. The key to attracting her husband was her figure.

Although the idea would make him feel excited, something seemed to be wrong.

"It's okay! We are rich!"

He scanned the crowded street as he laughed.

...

To be frank, it was Jiang Chen's first time shopping with a girl.

When he was at university, he didn't have the finances. After graduation, he worked at a clothing store. Ignoring all the subjective reasons, the most important one was that he didn't have a girlfriend!

In his imagination, taking a cute girl and seeing her change into all kinds of pretty clothes must be the happiest thing in life. Therefore, when he held Ayesha's hand, the first thing he thought of was to take her shopping.

Umm, he quickly realized his mistake.

In the beginning, Ayesha was still shy and was dazzled by so many selections, not knowing where to start. But when the energetic saleswoman noticed the hesitating Ayesha, her eyes lit up, and she walked over.

Jiang Chen was too familiar with that look because he worked at a clothing store before. He personally witnessed how his colleagues convince, with flattering words, a girl who initially wanted to save money for her boyfriend, buy a set of clothes worth over ten thousand.

But he didn't really care. Just like he what he said before.

He's rich, who cares.

The Ukranian saleswoman spoke excellent English. Her energetic work attitude also garnered the trust of Ayesha, who was usually afraid of strangers. Therefore, Jiang Chen only saw Ayesha move between clothing racks and change room. The clothes she wore were constantly changing.

Gothic skirt, refreshing long dress, sassy leather jacket...

At the start, Jiang Chen's eyes had a treat. Ayesha fitted all styles of clothing, which Jiang Chen signaled to buy buy buy without blinking an eye.

Ayesha was first reserved, but when she found out in surprise that every time she changed, Jiang Chen's eyes would light up, she was more and more interested. In the end, she couldn't even stop.

The clothes on the counter started to pile up. The saleswoman was so happy she couldn't even close her mouth. It was the first time seeing such an affluent customer.

But this troubled Jiang Chen.

Although Ayesha did look good in all different styles of clothing, they almost stayed at this store for two hours!

On this street, there were still hundreds more!

But since he already agreed, he must follow through even with tears in his eyes.

She finally finished trying on the last piece, Ayesha wore a white floral dress coming out of the fitting room. She looked shyly at Jiang Chen, ran a few quick steps, buried her head, and tipped her toes to peek between Jiang Chen's lips.

"Thank you... I feel really happy." The usually cold face was filled with emotion.

In that instant, all of Jiang Chen's weariness faded.

Worth it!

...

Looking at the saleswoman's almost climaxing expression, Jiang Chen swiped his card.

The owner of the clothing store personally sent him out the door, providing a 30% discount gold card in the act of appreciation, and then watched Jiang Chen carry a giant bag, walking away holding Ayesha's hand.

Around 100 pieces of clothes because almost everything looked good on her. Jiang Chen practically raided everything that was her size from the store. Money was not the problem. Only a few thousand USD. But how would they vacation with so much clothing?

Jiang Chen let out a sigh as he stopped at an ice cream shop. He ordered a vanilla ice cream for Ayesha and told her to wait a bit before carrying the giant bag into the crowd.

The people he passed by all turned around and gave him an odd look. Jiang Chen ignored everyone, walking straight into a pipe shop. Then he stopped in front of middle-aged men with his hands in his pocket, examining the pipe in the window.

"Following people is an art, do you guys lack funding this much? At least practice a little more." Jiang Chen sighed.

The man's face turned red, and he tried to argue, but Jiang Chen continued before he could open his mouth.

"That's enough. The secret police of Kane? You don't look like you are from Willie Society. KGB is much more professional than you. At least I didn't find their location." Jiang Chen threw the bag

onto the ground and grabbed the camera around his neck.

"Sir, did you mistaken-"

"Do you see? You are in these photos." Jiang Chen poked at the screen and looked at him mockingly.

Seeing that he was exposed, the man had a bitter smile on his face. "Why did you point it out? You'll make me lose my job."

"Lose your job? Poroshenko could still afford to pay people's salaries?" Jiang Chen laughed about his boss in front of him and pointed at the bag on the ground. "Send this to the Primir Hotel reception. You'll receive 1000 USD in compensation."

By the dumbfounded look of the person, Jiang Chen walked up and patted him on the shoulder with some force. He smiled. "Think for yourself more. The individuals in the frontline are looking for ways out. It's not bad taking some side jobs to feed yourself."

After finishing, Jiang Chen waved his hand and left a still dumbfounded rookie agent.

Chapter 150: For the Same Reason

When Jiang Chen stepped into the ice cream parlor again, he saw an entertaining scene that his face could not help but reveal a thoughtful expression.

Ayesha in a black dress was sitting at the table. Her original impassive face was now layered with frost.

Across from her, an East Slavic young man was talking to her rather enthusiastically.

"Hey, gorgeous, may I know your name?" The young man with aquiline nose gazed at Ayesha's eyes in what he obviously deemed as romantic.

Ignored.

"Ahem, I seemed to have seen you somewhere before."

No response.

Oleg stared at Ayesha in embarrassment. From a gentleman's perspective, if the other party had clearly expressed no interest, then pestering would only be regarded as cumbersome. But how could he endure it? Towards someone who was remarkably handsome, romantic, and suave like him, would there be someone who would thoroughly ignore him?

He took a deep breath and decided to deliver his ultimate "cool" move.

In one grand romantic gesture, he stood up, genuflected, and stared into Ayesha's eyes affectionately.

"From the first time I saw you, I couldn't help but fell irrevocably in love with you, my goddess."

Most customers in the ice cream shop began to look in their direction. Some young girls covered their mouth in surprise, and some even started to whistle. Proposals (like of marriage) would always be popular, no matter which country you were.

Oleg was indeed attractive and combined with his fit physique, looked every bit of a dashing Ukrainian man.

However, Ayesha had merely cast a glance at the clock on the wall indifferently.

She had always been indifferent towards strangers especially men. If it wasn't for Jiang Chen opposition, she would have worn the black cape she usually wore when sniping on their date.

Oleg's passionate expression was frozen on his face as he was left to stew in awkwardness. If he left, it would look like he was acting in a one-man show; on the other hand, Ayesha was clearly broadcasting an "I'm-too-lazy-to-bother-with-you" expression.

Smiling slightly, Jiang Chen walked forward.

"I'm sorry to have kept you waiting for so long."

Ayesha's eyes lit up instantly when she spotted him. She quickly got up and walked to his side and hugged his arm as though no one was around.

"He was pestering me, but I didn't pay him—" Ayesha explained in a faint voice as she was worried that Jiang Chen might misinterpret the situation.

"I know," Jiang Chen interrupted her explanation with a smile and rubbed her hair dotingly, "I trust you."

"Hmm." Ayesha turned slightly red and lowered her head, fingers unconsciously toying with Jiang Chen's cuffs.

Oleg was still frozen in the same awkward position, his mouth was twitching uncontrollably. The crowd's gaze gradually turned from encouraging to that of mockery and sympathy. Regardless of how thick his skin was for flirting with so many girls, his face still betrayed an embarrassed expression.

Disconcerted, he got up from the ground, fixed his collar and walked in front of Jiang Chen.

"Yellow skin? My goddess, how could you like someone—" After seeing Jiang Chen's face, his contemptuous expression

immediately cooled down.

"Why don't you keep up your gentlemanly pretense until the end? You look like a kid whose candy got stolen," Jiang Chen sneered.

"I dare you to say that again." Oleg extended his hand with a vicious smile as though Jiang Chen's provocation gave him a reason to start a fight. In his eyes, this yellow monkey would not be able to put up a fight.

Ayesha's eyes flashed a hint of iciness and just as she was about to make a move, Jiang Chen gently squeezed her hand, signaling that there was no need for her to lend a hand.

There was no way that he would let a girl protect him during a date, on the other hand, he was also too lazy to use force. His eyes then scanned his surroundings.

"Ahem, I have enough reason to conclude that this dumbass is sent by Willie society to give me trouble," he muttered under his breath.

Oleg hadn't even touched Jiang Chen yet when a middle-aged man sitting on next table vaulted and pushed him against the table in one incredibly swift motion.

"Fu*k, who the fu*k are you?" Oleg, not understanding the situation, struggled to fight back, but he was bound tightly by a

middle-aged man behind him.

"I'm the police! Don't you fu*king move!" The middle-aged man fumbled with the handcuffs and cuffed his hands. "Oleg, right? You are under arrest on account of being a threat to national safety. I hope you can cooperate with our investigation."

"What!" Oleg shouted incredulously, "I was just trying to pick up a girl. Everyone here can testify."

Another middle-aged man drinking coffee on the other side let out a sigh and walked in front of Jiang Chen.

"We apologize for giving you a fright. Do you need me to help you with contacting the embassy and arrange for your immediate return?" The middle-aged man in a gray vest looked at Jiang Chen and seemed anxious to depart.

"Thank you very much, but that won't be necessary. I still have two days left in my vacation. This small mishap would not affect our friendship, wouldn't it?" Jiang Chen extended his right hand with a smile.

The middle-aged man watched him for half a day before grasping his right hand silently.

[Since you guys had already followed for so long, wouldn't be a shame to not to use this free "bodyguard"?]

"I hope you have a great vacation. You know, there are still a lot of people working overtime." The middle-aged man was staring directly at Jiang Chen.

"Of course, I hope you have a pleasant overtime." Jiang Chen's smile was especially radiant.

...

After leaving the ice cream parlor, Jiang Chen didn't take Ayesha to the clothing stores and instead brought her to the movie theater. Although his mansion had a home theater comparable to a movie house, watching here amplified the experience.

Especially when on a date.

The screen was showing <Mission Impossible 5>. Although Jiang Chen had already seen it once, when he asked what movie Ayesha was interested in, she left out all the romance movies and only showed interest in action films.

Anyway, his real purpose was to make it up to her, so he gladly agreed with her choice. Moreover, it would be a total loss if one actually paid any attention to the movie while in the company of a girl.

Holding Ayesha's little hand, feeling her occasional bout of tenseness and the softness of her hand when she relaxed, he felt his mind was on cloud nine. The movie playing on the screen had no

hope of entering his mind.

[I can hold this hand forever!]

After leaving the movie theater, Jiang Chen stretched himself. Seeing Ayesha's furrowed brows, he gently smiled and asked, "What's the matter?"

"Umm." Ayesha stroked her chin and nodded thoughtfully. "I'm just thinking, why do the bullets never hit anyone? Clearly, the villain boss has so many underlings so why does he need to personally fight in the end? His marksmanship was not even that good."

Jiang Chen was speechless. It appeared that this girl did pay attention to the movie the entire time.

"Ahem, if they got hit with one shot, it wouldn't be called an action movie anymore. If the antagonist boss doesn't die in the end, it would then become a series. Overall, it's nice, isn't it?"

Hearing this, Ayesha was confused at first, then nodded her head, feeling slightly embarrassed.

"Mhmm."

...

In the evening, they took a stroll along Dnieper River, feeling the gentle breeze blowing on their face.

Jiang Chen took a peek at Ayesha who was holding on his arm.

The gorgeous face under the lantern light looked serene, her brown hair fluttered in the breeze, and a smile lingered on her lips.

It was such a guileless smile, and it was Jiang Chen first time seeing it on her face.

"Did you have fun today?" he asked, smiling faintly.

Hearing this, Ayesha's pale face turned slightly pink.

Slightly adjusting her position, Ayesha stuffed her hand into his.

"Hmm," she whispered but seemed to feel it was not conveying enough of her feelings, so she added, "Very, very happy."

"That's good." Jiang Chen smiled then turned to look at the river. The reflection of the moonlight decorated the Dnieper River's surface and suffused it with light.

Ayesha gazed at Jiang Chen's side contour, the eyes that were not good at expressing emotions flashed vulnerability and bewilderment.

"Why?" Ayesha murmured to herself like someone caught in a dream.

"Why?" Jiang Chen looked at her somewhat puzzled.

"I am only someone you picked up from the desert...Obviously, I'm already very happy."

Recalling the image of her parents in the pool of blood, the drowsiness while inside the truck and being transported to the refugee camp, recalling her past self who had pretty much given up on life, Ayesha suddenly felt herself tearing up.

Just being able to live in a stable country was already a happiness in itself.

"What's wrong?" Jiang Chen smiled gently and squeezed her soft, little hands a little harder.

"But...that's why I owe you even more," she murmured. She put her sandals on the gravel road and looked at her own reflection on the river.

"Did you follow me just because you wanted to pay me back?" Jiang Chen asked with a smile.

A flash of confusion appeared in her eyes, but shortly after she shook her head vigorously.

"No."

"Then why is it?"

After a moment of silence, Ayesha's cheek was gradually suffused with heat, the delicate, red lips were conflicted for a good while before finally saying the words that had been brewing for a long time but never got the courage to express, "Because I like you." She paused and stared into his eyes.

The look of vulnerability gradually disappeared from her eyes.

Hearing this, a warm smile emerged on Jiang Chen's face.

An answer he naturally expected, but no matter how many times she said it, it would never fail to make his heart raced.

"At first, I felt I owe you a lot and that's why I asked for this date," Jiang Chen murmured as he held Ayesha's hand.

"Owe?" Ayesha asked confusedly. She couldn't understand Jiang Chen's choice of words. It was obviously her who owed him a lot.

"That's right. In my opinion, you're at your most exciting age, but I have kept you in the mansion and then had been busy with my own affairs and now that I need you, I immediately gave you a gun."

"I don't mind being used by you." Ayesha tenderly squeezed Jiang Chen's hand.

"People are more or less hypocritical, but that's not what I am talking about." Jiang Chen smiled and responded to her affection. He paused before continuing again, "Just now, I suddenly realized that perhaps the real reason was not due to the feeling of I 'owe' you."

Rather, it is the same reason as yours."

Because you like me.

So I also like you, too.

The two fell into tacit understanding.

In the tranquil and romantic Dnieper River, two figures were locked in an embrace, their lips interlocking with one other.

Chapter 151: The End of the Journey

The next morning, Jiang Chen sat up on the bed while rubbing his still sleepy eyes.

A faint smile appeared on his face while looking at Ayesha, who was still curled up in blankets, sleeping like an adorable cat.

Needless to say, there were no words for what happened last night.

Maybe it was just his imagination; however, it seemed that from that night on, Ayesha had started becoming clingier. Although she remained expressionless in public when it was just the two of them...ahem, there's no need to say the rest.

Yesterday he took Ayesha around all the major tourist attractions, along with hundreds of photos carrying their beautiful memories, it could be considered as the perfect culmination of their Ukraine trip.

He leaned against the headboard, brooding for a short while, and then taking care not to disturb the still sleeping Ayesha, he sneaked out of bed.

He went to the bathroom, took a shower, and then took out his phone to call Robert.

"Ahem, buddy, I heard you've solved your problem. Uh, sorry, I

—" As soon as the phone connected, Robert's apologetic voice immediately came through.

"Ok, I didn't come here to listen to you apologize," Jiang Chen yawned and wandered to the balcony of the room. "Niger, last stop, how are things over there?"

"Don't worry, everything will be smooth sailing from here on. I already personally made the trip to ensure everything is ready." Robert touched his nose with embarrassment and his laugh echoed through the phone

"You personally made the trip? When did you become so diligent?" Jiang Chen asked, looking baffled. "Your "old friend" is not monitoring you?"

Jiang Chen smiled and leaned leisurely against the carved metal fence.

"Has the infrastructure construction been completed yet? I've already solved the training problem."

"Of course, I know a Portuguese builder who's an expert in this area. He previously assisted the French army to build a military outpost in Mali. In short, this guy was good at building military infrastructures. Asking price is not expensive—\$15million. I went and inspected it yesterday. It's already finished and the quality was also excellent."

[Hmm, not bad.]

Jiang Chen nodded with satisfaction and changed the topic.

"What about the refugees?"

"Done."

"Great. Wait for me in Niger." Jiang Chen then hung up the phone.

All of a sudden, he felt a piece of clothing gently draping over his back. Upon turning around, he was greeted by Ayesha's tender but fiery eyes.

"You're up." Jiang Chen smiled and gently held the small hand on his shoulder.

"Mhmm, it's a bit cold here, especially in the morning. Are you hungry? I'll make you breakfast," Ayesha said softly.

Jiang Chen's eyes bore into Ayesha's eyes.

Being stared like that by Jiang Chen, Ayesha's cheeks turned scarlet and whispered, "What?"

"Nothing, I've just realized you're becoming more and more

beautiful." Jiang Chen grinned wickedly while staring into her eyes.

Gently clutching her panicking hands, he pulled Ayesha back into the house.

"Come on, we're getting that breakfast."

...

Breakfast at Primir Hotel was exquisite though somewhat bit expensive.

After eating breakfast, Jiang Chen checked out at the front desk, and then while holding Ayesha's hand, boarded the taxi and headed to Boris Boer International Airport.

What luggage? Just store them directly in the storage dimension.

After getting off the vehicle, Ayesha returned to her usual cold expression and followed Jiang Chen half a step behind.

At the airport gate, Jiang Chen met Nick along with ten Ukrainian men who were hauling their suitcases.

He greeted Nick and turned to look at the ten soldiers of the former 92nd Mechanized Infantry.

"It's such a great honor. You've made the right choice," Jiang Chen smiled and extended his arms in a welcoming gesture.

"Not like we have much of choice," the man named Ivan shrugged. His stiff face contorted slightly before continuing, "But the opportunities you provided are sure very attractive."

Laughing, Jiang Chen expression was very cordial. "Of course, I've always been very good with my people."

"At least the old guy Anderson doesn't need to worry about housing anymore," said a huge bald man with a smile as he pounded the back of his comrade standing next to him.

"House?"

"That's right." Ivan rolled his eyes and shrugged. "I served the army for 25 years when the former Soviet Union still existed. Unfortunately, I have been enlisted in the Kaneian army. I was on the list for housing in 1987, but with how things are looking, it would take 100 more years before it would be my turn."

"That's nothing," said the bald guy, patting the guy who continued to remain quiet. "It's even more unfortunate for Anderson. It was already his turn when his name was replaced by someone else."

"Don't keep using me as an example. Whoever wants to fight for those swindlers can go right ahead. This country has nothing to do

with me anymore," Anderson softly rebuked with an unhappy expression.

"Ok, guys, why don't we chat in the waiting area."

A group of people standing in front of the airport looked out of place however you look at it. Jiang Chen noticed that the police in the front door was deliberately looking in their direction.

It was a critical period after all, so any group of people gathering around would cause suspicion.

...

There was still an hour before the plane took off and Jiang Chen was fooling around with Nick in the waiting area. Ayesha was sitting impassively beside Jiang Chen and was holding a fashion magazine provided by the airport. It seemed like, after the shopping spree, some kind of strange interest was awakened in her.

"Where have you been to these past few days?"

"Went back home and then traveled for a bit," Nick responded succinctly and grinned.

"Speaking of which, you didn't bring your family to Los Santos?" Jiang Chen asked, somewhat surprised.

"They can't." Nick's face revealed a rare melancholic expression.

Jiang Chen didn't know what to say. He seemed to have realized something as a wry smile appeared on his face.

Looking at the flight information over his head, he appeared nostalgic and said, "Do you remember the wooden cabin in Oesk? That's my home."

"Sorry for making you remember something bad," Jiang Chen said softly.

"It's okay, it's all in the past."

Previously, Jiang Chen only heard Robert mentioning about Nick's hometown being in Ukraine. However, he didn't think that it would be in Donetsk and his house would be that cabin.

Due of the heavy atmosphere, the conversation was halted.

After looking at the time, Jiang Chen got up and walked towards the restroom. Before boarding the plane, he decided to take it easy first.

But just as he was about to leave the restroom, he unexpectedly ran into someone, who he's expecting to be there.

The same gray vest, aquiline nose, Willie Agent he met the day before yesterday in the ice cream shop.

"You finally came looking for me. Speaking of which, I still don't know your name." Jiang Chen extended his hand with a smile.

"My job means that it's inconvenient for me to reveal my name, but you may call me Merlin." Merlin shook his hand, but his eyes were locked on Jiang Chen.

"Merlin? Magician? Your overtime is over?"

"That's right. Thanks to you." Although he said thank you, there was not a trace of gratitude on his face.

"Where is the sniper?" Meilin cut straight to the point.

"In a house in Oesk City. I heard the endurance of snipers is not bad, so before I left I feed him well. Should be enough to sustain him for three days without a problem." Jiang Chen smiled.

The expression on Merlin's face had not changed and his hawk-like glare was still piercing.

"His exact location. According to the agreement, you said you'll give us his coordinate before leaving the country."

"It's on this USB." Jiang Chen casually took out a thumb-sized

USB and handed it to Merlin.

Merlin silently reached out to hold the USB only to find out that Jiang Chen wasn't letting go. He cast a suspicious look at Jiang Chen.

"I haven't boarded yet," Jiang Chen stated with a smile.

"We'll keep our end of the bargain." Merlin's exerted a bit more strength.

"But I don't trust that." Jiang Chen's grip on the USB remained firm.

"Why?" Merlin's facial muscle was all wound up due to the pressure.

"There is still half an hour before we board the plane. To ensure that I'll safely get on the plane and land safely at my destination, I just want to remind you one thing before giving this to you," Jiang Chen paused, smiled when he saw the tension on Merlin's face, before continuing, "I have encrypted the contents inside this USB. After inserting it in the computer for one and half hour, it would automatically unlock the encrypted information inside. If anything happens to me during this trip, I'm sorry, but KGB might get their hands on the sniper's coordinate location first."

One hour was enough for the plane to land in Nigeria.

After saying his piece, Jiang Chen let his hand loose without warning. Merlin clutched the USB awkwardly and bumped into the washroom door, stumbling a few steps backward.

Staring intently at Jiang Chen, Merlin suddenly burst out laughing.

"I didn't expect you to be a programmer."

His original plan was to wait until they acquire the sniper's location and then immediately arrest Jiang Chen. There are far too many reasons for Wollie Society to do this. As for the organization behind Jiang Chen—ridiculous, why would they be afraid?

Jiang Chen shrugged, "No, but I am the boss, I have a lot of competent employees."

Naturally, the codes in the USB were Yao Yao's masterpiece

"Good, I hope you never set foot in Ukraine again," Merlin took the USB, left words dripping with threats and walked away.

"I hope you'll be able to receive your salary sooner before your boss goes bankrupt," He shouted at his leaving figure before returning to the boarding area with a smile.

He sat next to Ayesha, who was still holding the same fashion magazine.

"Those people left." Ayesha lowered her voice.

The secret agents who had been sitting nearby had already left, and the waiting room seemed deserted for a moment.

"Yes, I had a talk with their boss. Which dress do you like? Jiang Chen skillfully changed the topic.

Ayesha blushed as her fingers rubbed against the page.

"This one—ah! No, I already have enough clothes..."

"Hmm, this one should fit you nicely. Alright, let's buy it! Copy the website, and I'll show you how to shop online..."

Nick glanced at the two people and cracked a smile on their display of "affection." He then looked at the clock on the wall again.

It was almost time to board.

[Farewell, my hometown. I wish you peace.]

Chapter 152: The Last Stop

Niger, Niamey International Airport.

"Buddy, haha, we meet again." Robert passionately greeted and embraced Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen awkwardly shoved him away. "Ahem, I think it's better if we just shake hands."

"No, no, no, this is to sincerely express my remorse." He pounded Jiang Chen's back quite vigorously. Then he walked in front of a Hummer and exaggeratedly opened the door with a teasing smile. "Please get in the car, Your Honorable Dictatorship."

"I still have a long way to go," Jiang Chen retorted with a smile.

He took Ayesha to sit at the back of the car, while Nick naturally took the passenger seat in front.

"Now that you think about it, I do believe fate has brought us together in the desert." Robert stepped on the gas, held the stirring wheel and started the ignition. He remarked while smiling, "Last time, it was in the desert in Iraq too."

"Last time, I was there to wipe your ass for you. Hopefully, you won't get into trouble this time," Jiang Chen couldn't resist the temptation to mock him.

"Ahem, aren't you missing the point here? There's an American who runs an errand all over the world for you, a Slavic who went to the frontline with you, and a beauty sitting beside you," Robert jested and looked at him through the rearview mirror of the car.

Hearing this, although there was no visible change in Ayesha's expression, her face turned into a crimson shade.

"Just focus on your driving. Stop talking nonsense anymore," Jiang Chen laughingly reprimanded him and then paused before asking, "Where's the location of the base?"

"Sahara desert, Niger. It's an undeveloped area in Agadez Region. Better prepare yourself mentally as it could be quite desolated out there," Robert reminded.

The outside of the airport was in Loess Hill, and there were hardly any buildings in sight. Aside from the road, there were dust and yellow sands everywhere. A gust of wind would occasionally sweep a layer of dust.

Moreover, it was probably the only airport Jiang Chen had seen without a taxi lane, a bus stop, let alone a subway.

"Damn, how could this place be so poor!" he swore while he stared out of the window into the endless sand dunes that went as far as the eyes could see.

How can you say that this is the capital? At the very least, it

shouldn't be this undeveloped.

"Downtown is much better. It's like the suburbs of Los Angeles." Robert laughed. "10 kilometers more to go. We're not that far. Speaking of poverty, Niger's Minister of Commerce Armani would like to meet you and invite you to dinner."

"To attract foreign investment?" Jiang Chen asked dispassionately. He leaned back on the chair and yawned. "Why don't you go on my behalf? I already bought 20 acres of wasteland. I'm temporarily not interested in investing in any other projects."

"Ahem, no, there's actually more to it. Basic necessities such as water, power supply, food, ammunition that will be used in training, and so on," Robert reminded him.

Those indeed posed as a concern. Jiang Chen pondered on it while pinching his chin.

"Military supplies, that I can solve. As for the others...what do you suggest?" Jiang Chen looked at Robert.

"For the power supply, my advice is to buy a few sets of fuel generators or a batch of solar cells. The sun is pretty intense here, so I think solar power would be our best choice. As for the water, it seems to be illegal to drill well in here. And I also don't suggest engaging in squabbles with the local tribes. I heard that even the Niger government couldn't control them, so it's best if we outsource them. Food and basic necessities can be purchased locally. The cost of living here can be quite cheap, especially the

food."

"Then let's do that," Jiang Chen nodded.

"If that's the case, you definitely need to meet Armani. But before that, I'll send you to the hotel where you'll be staying." Robert shrugged and smiled.

The car finally drove into the downtown area.

Niger River ran through the city. The river was lush verdant, just like an oasis in the desert.

In fact, it was not as bad as what Robert made it out to be. At the very least, Niamey, the capital of the country, didn't seem that bad. Although he hadn't seen the suburbs of Los Angeles, when they reached the downtown area, the surrounding buildings looked rather sophisticated.

He only stayed at the hotel for a short while before he changed into a suit Robert had prepared for him and got into the car.

This time, instead of Robert's Hummer, it was Niger Department of Commerce for receiving VIP guests.

They got off at a restaurant where they apparently received foreign guests. A black man in a suit walked toward him and greeted him with a smile

"Welcome, Mr. Jiang Chen. You must be the oriental billionaire Robert was talking about." The elderly black minister warmly held Jiang Chen's right hand and shook it firmly.

Much to Jiang Chen's surprise, Armani could actually speak in Han.

"Thank you for inviting me, Mr. Armani," he responded to his enthusiastic greetings.

"I knew a lot of Han comrades as outstanding as you. We have a lot of comrades here in Niger coming from Han, so you can think of this place as your second home. Niger welcomes you," Armani said warmly, speaking in a rather fluent Han.

"Haha, of course."

Pleasantries completed, Jiang Chen and Armani walked into the restaurant with an entourage of bodyguards and other personnel in tow. This "welcome ceremony" was quite lavish.

Seeing this, a sudden strange idea popped up into Jiang Chen's mind.

He was wondering when he returns home for New Year, would his major bring a congregation of people to welcome him in a grand fashion such as this? He was, after all, the man who appeared in the Wall Street Journal. The government newspaper

also lauded him for his achievement in the technology sector. Even in the entire province, not a lot of people could outshine him.

Sheesh, it would be so cool to go home and be welcomed in such a grand fashion.

Despite being in overseas, distance did not interfere with his wish-fulfillment fantasies.

Armani invited him to sit with him. The side-by-side seating arrangement spoke volumes about how highly the Minister of Commerce regarded him.

Naturally, looking from this angle, one could also see how poor Niger was.

Perhaps because of the presence of numerous Han investors in Niger, Armani chose to discuss business during dinner. He clearly knew the intricacies of their culture as he perfunctorily drank two glasses before deciding to stop.

Obviously, he was drinking while talking business according to "Han custom".

After another exchange of greetings, Armani naturally led the topic into the right track.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Jiang, for investing in Niger. Is there anything we can assist you with to make this process easier? The

basic economic condition is excellent and we're now in the stage of rapid development. There are a lot of business opportunities to invest in..."

Listening to Armani's passionate speech or drivel, Jiang Chen couldn't help but ridicule him in his mind. [You don't even have a cab at your airport, yet you have the audacity to say that your economic situation is good!]

But even if the heart said so, the words could not be said out loud.

"Of course, I am very optimistic about the domestic development of your country. And that's exactly the reason why I'm establishing a security company and building a training facility here." Listening to this black uncle speaking for a long time, Jiang Chen still maintained his composure.

The meaning behind these words was: I have no interest in investing now.

However, Armani was apparently not ready to give up that easily as he continued to enthusiastically discuss some other projects in great details. His meaning was obvious: give me some money right now.

"How about this, I have a proposal—to facilitate seamless transportation of goods, I intend to invest in road construction from the provincial capital of Agadez province to the undeveloped area." In fact, this idea was brewing in his mind for a while now, and it was an excellent opportunity to bring it up.

As soon as Armani heard about the road construction, his eyes instantly brightened. If they could build roads, not only it would drastically improve the livelihood of people in the undeveloped areas, it would also strengthen the government's control over the rebellious tribes.

"Haha, Niger citizens will surely be very grateful for your generosity and friendship, Mr. Jiang."

"Don't mention it. It is up to you to study the specific planning of the road, and then we will discuss it further based on your proposal," Jiang Chen responded with a smile while looking at the eagle-eyed Armani.

Finally the dinner concluded in a harmonious mood. The minister of commerce personally sent him back to the hotel where he was staying.

"How is it, my friend?" Robert asked while grinning at him. He was standing at the entrance of the hotel.

"Annoying. Do ministers always talk this much? They're so damned desperate for an investment."

That Armani was a rather interesting character, a politician with a flair for public speaking. There was nothing wrong with soliciting investment, but when Armani sensed his lack of interest, he became more assertive and went on forever. For a while there, although he knew that Armani was speaking Han, he had no idea

what he was talking about.

"Hahaha!" Robert started to laugh hysterically and patted him on the shoulder.

"My friend, now you understand my pain? The first day I was here, he basically serenades to me for the entire day. But I cleverly brought your name up and said that I was only working for you, and the real person with money is a guy named Jiang Chen."

"That's not funny." Jiang Chen glared at him and entered the hotel.

Robert caught up to him and started getting down to a more serious topic.

"Simply put, it could be quite annoying to talk business with black people, but we can't just give them some candies and send them away. Tomorrow we'll head over to Agadez province to inspect your military base.

"Ahem, it's a training facility for a security company."

"It doesn't matter since everyone already knows," Robert commented carelessly.

Stopping in front of the elevator, Robert nudged him with his elbow and quipped, "We'll depart early morning tomorrow so don't go crazy tonight."

Without waiting for his reaction, Robert dashed into the elevator that's about to close.

"This pervert," Jiang Chen said with amusement and shook his head.

But at that moment, an image of Ayesha dressed in a white floral dress last night appeared in his mind.

[Uh, okay,] Jiang Chen decided.

[I'll sleep a bit later tonight and accompany her to try on a few clothes.]

Chapter 153: The Tuareg Tribe

In the morning, the tranquil Sahara desert welcomed a group of strange guests.

Three Hummers galloped the vast endless expanse of sand, leaving three trails of dust behind the undisturbed desert.

"How much longer?" Jiang Chen asked in boredom while sitting in the back with his arms crossed.

Ayesha, who was sitting beside him, had the same emotionless expression, but from the dark, deep circles under her eyes, it was evident she didn't get enough sleep.

"It's just right ahead of us! But first, we need to greet the chiefs of the nearby tribes," Robert yelled enthusiastically while driving.

"Why do I feel that you get really excited when you're in the desert?" Jiang Chen glanced at him.

"This feeling of freedom is something that you'll never understand!"

This guy is crazy.

Jiang Chen mulled things over while looking outside the window.

The other two Hummers sat ten veterans recruited as instructors; compared to the energy here, theirs was much quieter.

Soon the vehicle drove into small sand dunes with a harder surface.

When Jiang Chen's vision suddenly cleared, he saw rows and rows of small huts.

Primitive, ignorance, poverty.

These three words summed up his first impression.

Yellowish gray house and courtyard piled up from gravel. Withered branches were tied together and used as the gate of the courtyard, and the windows were covered with dyed cloths like an ancient Arabic town in the 12th century. Every household kept a camel. It was said that here a man's social status was measured by how many camels he possessed.

"I'm a bit confused. Perhaps you can explain to me our purpose of coming here?" Jiang Chen asked helplessly.

"Of course. Er, it might be a tad difficult to understand based from the modern perspective. Afterall, we already paid the money and purchased the land from the government of Niger. A portion of that money was also used to compensate them for taking up their ranch. As far as the contract is concerned, the 20 hectares of

land not far from here are ours, but according to the local customs, our identity is still that of a "guest". So following their tradition, we must obtain their recognition first before we can "settle" here," Robert explained.

"That troublesome?" Jiang Chen's mouth twitched.

"In fact, it's only a formality since they are more or less secularized," Robert shrugged and slowed down the speed of the car, "Still, there are some benefits from respecting their local tradition. At the very least, we can harmoniously co-exist without worrying about them giving us trouble, and they may even stand by our side during critical moments."

"I don't quite understand what you're saying. So who is the owner of this piece of land? Is it Niger? The Tuareg tribe?"

"Hmm, you can think of it as Niger as the king of the middle age, and Tuareg tribe as the lord of this piece of land." Roberts rolled his eyes as he gave an unlikely metaphor.

"If we get into a conflict with them, which side would the Niger government be on?" Jiang Chen asked a dangerous question after listening to Robert's explanation.

A troubled smile appeared on Robert's face upon hearing Jiang Chen's question.

"The Niger government will be delighted if we could wipe them

out, but that's kind of impossible. Tuareg men are scattered throughout the desert. And rumor says that they have some unusual relationship with extremist organizations like Al-Qaeda. The Tuareg guerrillas also fought alongside Al-Qaeda during a riot in Mali."

Robert paused when he noticed Jiang Chen's unresponsiveness. For fear that Jiang Chen might do something harsh, he immediately added, "Uh, I suggest we better not clash with them. The people here are quite tough, and despite being poor, every household has an AK lying around."

"Don't be nervous, I was just asking," Jiang Chen quipped.

When the car drove into the tribe, all natives cast the vehicles with a curious look. Due to the poor road condition, Robert rolled down the window and signaled the two vehicles behind to stay outside of the tribe.

It was not a big deal, following the local tradition shouldn't take long to complete.

"That's the food market over there, but I don't recommend you trying out the things they sell there."

"What a coincidence, I'm also not interested." Jiang Chen looked outside the window. A kid on a camel gave him a curious look, and his father, who was wearing a veil, led the camel out of the tribe.

Ayesha subtly glanced at the window and muttered one phrase: "Heresy."

The car stopped, following the direction of a black woman, Jiang Chen and Robert walked into the building of the central tribe.

...

Tuareg tribe, a nomadic ethnic confederation mainly distributed in the suburbs of the Sahara Desert in Africa, and a branch of the Berber clan spread throughout the vast region of North Africa. Renowned for their writing, language, and unique nomadic life, which were substantially different from those of their surrounding neighbors. Instead of a matriarchal social organization, Tuareg was a matrilineal society. Although they believe in Islam, women were not required to wear a veil. On the contrary, men 25 and above must wear a veil in the Tuareg clan society.

What was more striking was its open marital values wherein women could have multiple marriage partners, and in case of divorce, all assets would belong to them.

Apart from these strange customs, they were naturally born warriors. There was a notable local motto: "The desert holds no secret to Tuareg people." In this desert, they knew how to fight better than anyone else. During the Mali civil war, Tuareg guerrillas delivered consecutive losses to the government forces.

Moreover, because of its strong combat ability, there were a lot of Mediterranean dictators and warlords who were interested in their

fighting prowess. The most famous one was Gaddafi, who particularly favored Tuareg mercenaries. After the outbreak of the civil war in Libya, Gaddafi even offered the Tuareg tribe a lucrative remuneration of \$1000 USD a day to help him quell an anti-government militant. Of course, no one knew if the money had actually been honored or true in the first place.

Robert had, in fact, recommend to Jiang Chen that since they chose Niger as the location for the base, recruiting Tuareg people might not be such a bad idea. However, after some consideration, Jiang Chen still rejected his proposal.

The main reason was Jiang Chen's lack of trust in their culture and religion and also to avoid potential issues that could arise in the future. At least those refugees who fled their hometown would not suddenly clamor to go home. In any case, the refugees were more reliable.

In the relatively spacious house, Jiang Chen saw the legendary tribal chief.

"Distant visitors, may your wealth be endless like the sands of the Sahara." The dark-skinned Female chief nodded slightly, her hands clasped together.

Perhaps because she often dealt with French people, her French was rather fluent. But regardless of how fluent she was, Jiang Chen who only knew English could not understand a thing, so he simply stood there and kept mum while waiting for Robert's next move.

"Thank you for your generosity in sharing your land. May your tribe flourish and your camels grow in flocks," Robert responded in fluent French. Even now, Jiang Chen could not figure out just how many languages this guy knew.

Upon hearing this, the elderly female chief cracked a smile, her wrinkles scrunching up together.

The following ceremony was quite simple. A man, whose head was wrapped in a frighteningly thick turban, carried two bowls of camel milk and placed them in front of them. According to the local's custom, the thicker the turban and veil were, the more respect they were showing to their guests.

It was said that in the past whenever a male guest visited here, he was also required to wear a headscarf, or at least his mouth must be covered. But now it appeared that they have made some concessions to foreign cultures in the process of adapting to modern times.

It was unknown whether the female chief was chanting a mantra or praying, but she spoke for a long time before she gestured to the two people with a smile.

Looking at that bowl of cloudy camel milk in front of him, Jiang Chen could not help but wonder if it was just freshly squeezed out. When he looked at Robert, he noticed that this man's eyebrows were furrowed as well.

"Is this really potable?" Jiang Chen whispered in English.

"Yes, but trust me, you won't drink it again after you have your first." Although Robert's expression was somewhat bitter as he attempted a herculean feat of downing the camel milk with his eyes closed.

From the looks of it, this was his second time drinking this awful stuff.

Jiang Chen was secretly speechless.

Seeing Robert's swift action, the smile on the female chief's face became more brilliant. The faster the guest drank, the more it reflected their respect for the host.

When she looked at Jiang Chen, however, her eyes grew even brighter.

Robert had not even put the bowl down, Jiang Chen had already put the empty bowl on the table.

It took Robert a while before he finally finished and placed the bowl on the table with a quivering hand. Thus when he saw Jiang Chen's empty bowl, his eyes almost popped out from its sockets.

After coming out from the tribal chief's house, the two men received a warm farewell.

Back in the car, Robert hummed as he wiped his mouth.

"Sh*t, I feel like I've got a layer of grease in my stomach," Robert complained as he looked at Jiang Chen oddly, "You okay with that strange smell?"

"What strange smell? It was okay." Jiang Chen laughed loftily as he leaned back and then put his arms behind his head.

Other than the grease that barely touched his mouth, he didn't drink a single drop and all of it was sent to the storage dimension.

He was getting more adept at using this ability.

After their friendly interaction with the neighbors, the three Hummers returned to the road once again.

Finally, Jiang Chen saw a "castle" in the middle of the desert - Future Security.

Chapter 154: Future Security

Barbed wire fences, concrete watchtowers, and buildings—these structures greatly resembled a small military base.

"What do you think?" Robert turned around and smiled proudly.

"Not bad." There was also a satisfied expression on Jiang Chen's face.

Very neat.

The three Hummers stopped at the checkpoint at the entrance. The patrolling soldiers wearing dark sunglasses approached the car, and after verifying Robert's information, they performed a simple military salute and then released the checkpoint post.

The soldiers patrolling here were mercenaries hired from a security company in South Africa. With Jiang Chen's arrival, 20 people in a camouflage combat uniform wielding M-series automatic rifles quickly assembled in a neat formation in the center of the base.

These people only knew how to follow money and would not ask any questions. Their price was entirely based on the degree of danger of the mission, and Robert was able to negotiate with them for the price of \$70,000 USD.

As the situation in the region escalated, Jiang Chen made some

adjustments to the refugee's recruitment plan after deliberating it with Robert. The original plan was to hijack refugee ships, and then forcibly transfer them to the military base here. It was later changed to heading directly to the Syria border and masquerading as US troops responsible for escorting the refugees, and tricking them to getting on the vehicle that would originally lead them to Europe.

As for tricking them, the answer was quite simple.

A flyer and a poster.

<European Labor Migration Program:

Any male between 18-25 may register here. You can bring your spouse with you.

Those who are interested may register here. The agency will arrange jobs for you.

Required: 100.>

Seeing that not only you could bring your spouse and there was also a guaranteed work to boot, and not to mention these people were equipped with American weapons, the registration turned out to be popular.

After those who managed to qualify got into the vehicle, it didn't take long for them to realize that something was amiss.

Upon confirming that they were heading in the wrong direction, the refugees began panicking and frantically scampered to get off the truck, but the mercenaries, who were merely doing their responsibility to complete their mission, remained unperturbed, and they forcefully dragged all the refugees back inside.

After completing their "escort" duty, their mission was changed into guarding the refugees and preventing any attacks from extremist organizations or any other unforeseen situations.

According to the contract, as soon as Jiang Chen's group arrived, they would immediately hand over the control of the base and depart. For them, this was probably the easiest task they ever had, even though the pay wasn't much.

Seeing the retreating figures of the mercenaries, Jiang Chen gestured for the ten Ukraine veterans to line up behind him and signaled Robert to turn on the speaker and gather the refugees to the square.

The refugees were already converging in that direction.

After witnessing the mercenaries, who had turned over the control of the base to Jiang Chen, drove away, they felt an amalgam of complex and confusing emotions.

They previously thought those people were American soldiers, who would take them to a safe location or at least a refugee camp near the border of a European country, but they didn't expect to be

taken to a completely opposite direction and deep into the desert.

At first, they thought it was the base of an extremist group, but it did not look quite like it in all respects. Other than preventing them from leaving, they didn't make many forceful demands. The soldiers put a number on them and even arranged rooms for them that were much more spacious than those from a refugee camp.

And even if no one stopped them from leaving, there was nowhere they could go.

This place was in the middle of the Sahara desert. Without any means of transportation and sufficient supply, how far would their feet be able to take them? They would surely die if they met a sandstorm or if they got lost in the desert.

After going through the initial phase of restlessness, they chose to wait and observe. At least these people didn't torture them, and there were not many restrictions on food and water. One could even say that life here was better than any refugee camps.

Perhaps this place was the new refugee camp planned by the United Nations. After all, Europeans didn't want them to migrate to their country, so they funded the construction of facilities in the depths of the desert...there were a number of people with this kind of naive thinking.

However, they were doomed to be gravely disappointed by Jiang Chen.

Any gain had a price to it.

...

Looking at the refugees standing all over the place, Jiang Chen tilted his head slightly and asked Ivan, who was standing on the side, "What do you think about these people? Do you have the confidence in training them?"

Upon hearing this, a glimpse of pride flashed on Ivan's face.

There was a time when he thought that he would only serve under a president, who was not worthy of his allegiance, and serve as a cannon fodder for the sake of ideals that were not worth sacrificing for. However, as he stood there looking at the advanced training facility, and receiving the promised high salary, and when the boss asked him: "Are you confident..."

The answer was a no-brainer.

"That would depend on what the boss wants," Ivan raised his head and replied firmly, as though he had just regained his pride as a soldier.

Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows, his chin pointed toward the doorway, "Similar to the group of people that had just left."

"Yes, boss!" Ivan shouted vehemently, "But, boss, I have a problem!"

"Oh? Say it," Jiang Chen nodded, pleased with his determination.

"I might go overboard," The soldier's eyes were burning with a fierce fighting spirit.

Hearing that, Jiang Chen paused and then unexpectedly laughed.

"If you go above and beyond, I'll be sure to give you a bonus."

Jiang Chen patted his shoulder quite vigorously and stood on the podium while smiling in front of the refugees.

Sensing that an authoritative figure had stood up, the refugees mustered their courage to voice their doubts.

"Who in the world are you?"

"Why did you take us here? We want to go to Europe!"

"I heard Frankberg provided refugee camp. Why didn't you send us there?"

" ... "

Jiang Chen ignored these questions, and continued fiddling with the microphone and turned on its switch.

Buzz—!

The deafening static blared through the four corners of the square, and aside from Jiang Chen and the ten instructors, almost everyone covered their ears while ducking down.

"Ahem, seems like the mic is now working. You all can understand English, right? Then I'll start."

He ignored the pairs of frightened, angry, confused, and helpless eyes. He paused while renewing the feeling from the wasteland.

"You might think that you've been deceived. Why didn't you disembark in Greece but had been taken to Central Africa instead?" Glancing around the crowd, Jiang Chen laughed and continued, "That's right, I did trick you."

The crowd instantly erupted.

"This is unlawful!"

"Are you not afraid of being prosecuted by International Court of Justice? This is against the law..."

"Send us back..."

"Send you back? Sorry, I'm not obliged to do so. But if any of you

wants to leave, you can go right ahead, the door is open," Jiang Chen said with a smile as he spread out his hands.

Nobody spoke. Everyone knew that it would be stupid to cross the desert without any means of transportation.

"Warm shelter, delicious food, and clean water, you can't deny that your life here is much better than your refugee camps on the Syria border."

"But at least we would still have our freedom," someone muttered in the crowd.

"Ah, freedom. You're so poor, you only have your freedom and that's why you got on the truck, right? If you have money, you definitely could afford the ticket, isn't that right?" Jiang Chen smiled as he stared at the young man who interrupted him.

The young man didn't expect to be stared at by the person on the podium, he swallowed and shrank back a little.

But Jiang Chen did not seem to be looking at him and instead raised his hand and continued, "If you go to Europe, what then? You'll hole up in a government-provided shelter while spectating someone else's happiness? Quit your delusions. That place doesn't belong to you. You are but a refugee to them. Oh, you might say that you'll work hard, but when their natives are still unemployed, what kind of competitive edge do you think you'll have?"

Hearing this, a lot of people lowered their head. They had given this problem some thought, but they never dared to think that far ahead. If one dwelled too much on misery, the courage to continue to move forward would become even slimmer, and not to mention the possibility of finding happiness in the future.

"Receiving donation, eating relief food and becoming the type of person, who people would find suspicious wherever you go. I'll take the responsibility of telling you that indeed, you'll be able to survive, but you'll also stay in the shelter for the rest of your life. One day when your child wants to go to an amusement park, but because you have no money, you can only rack your brains on how to persuade your child that it's not a fun place. I don't know how would you then feel about it.

"Do you still want to go to Europe so bad after hearing all that?" Jiang Chen looked at the audience whose eyes had lost their vigor due to his momentum. Seeing this, he could not help the touch of smug smile slipped through his face.

"Where else can we go if we don't go to Europe?" A young man could not help but voice it out.

"Even if I did trick you, it's not exactly a lie." Jiang Chen ignored his question and opened his arms and said while smiling, "Work, I've already arranged it for you. If you work for me, I'll provide you a stable living environment and a salary of \$200 USD a month. Your salary will increase gradually depending on your performance."

"The contract period is 3 years, and after 3 years, you can then

decide whether to leave and take your savings to any other country in the world or stay. But trust me, in less a year, you won't be thinking about that dumb thought."

"If you don't tell us the nature of work, how are we supposed to believe you?" There was another jarring question from the crowd again.

"Nature of work? Isn't that obvious?"

Jiang Chen acted like he was surprised and made a show of looking around for a moment before continuing, "This is a military base, other than soldiers, what else would it need?"

Chapter 155: Once upon a time, there was an emperor

Another uproar.

Naturally, the crowd flared up again.

They thought that they would only be mining at an obscure place or engage in a hard labor, and the military facility was only there to supervise them, but what they did not expect was Jiang Chen wanted them to become mercenaries!

Was this a joke? They left their home for the very reason of avoiding the war. If they were to participate in the battlefield again, wouldn't that defeat the purpose of fleeing?

Someone asked this question out loud and denounced Jiang Chen that no one had the right to force civilians to wield weapons and set foot on the battlefield.

Hearing this, all Kane veterans guffawed.

"You're asking me what's the point? You'll understand that in the future. I'm too lazy to talk nonsensical things. You're asking what right do I have? Of course none, but like I've said, if you want to leave, go right ahead and leave. You have half an hour to decide, and if you still remain in the base after half an hour, then I would consider that you acquiesce by default."

After delivering his speech, no matter how these people protested, Jiang Chen directly did an about-face and left the podium.

There obviously won't be an applause for him, and he certainly didn't need one.

Just like the Fishbone Base at the beginning, when they found themselves unable to resist and living, in fact, a comfortable life, they would gradually accept sooner or later.

Moreover, Ivan would naturally train them to be absolutely loyal to the organization and shaped them into becoming a soldier.

Jiang Chen went next to Ivan and patted him on the shoulder. "I'll leave them in your care."

"Yes, boss!" the East Slavic soldier bellowed as he saluted and maintained his military posture.

He nodded his head with satisfaction. He then waved at Ayesha, who was standing quietly in the shadow, and then walked together towards the headquarters.

While walking, Jiang Chen looked at Ayesha and suddenly asked, "Say, Ayesha, your hometown is in Syria, right?"

"Mhmm."

After a moment of hesitation, he continued, "Umm, would my actions make you feel uncomfortable? After all, it's your hometown —"

"No, I will always stand by your side," Ayesha shook her head, her cold face suddenly revealed a gentle smile, "And you are a very gentle person."

Jiang Chen almost choked on his own saliva.

[Are you kidding me? What do you mean by gentle?]

"Ahem, although the first one moved me, I beg to differ on the latter part." He had never hesitated when killing except for the time when he made his first kill.

Just then, a small hand reached out to clasp his hand.

It seemed that after the night by the river, she fell in love with the feeling of holding hands, and she would always inadvertently reach out to his hand.

"Do you remember the time when you were in the truck?" Ayesha asked quietly.

Although it was not clear why she mentioned the past, he still smiled and squeezed her hand nonetheless.

"Of course I remember. How could I forget?"

It was quite interesting to think that back then, he didn't even notice that Ayesha was a girl.

"Even to a stranger like me, you still lent a helping hand when you saw my hungry eyes."

Jiang Chen smiled, "Do you mean those biscuits? Those were cheap."

Ayesha shook her head and clenched Jiang Chen's hand. Her mouth was slightly curved in a smile.

"But you still chose to share rather than to sit on the sidelines and watch." Being alone on her quest for freedom, she was already numb to apathy.

Jiang Chen slightly lowered his head and fell into deep thought.

[Shared? Have I really? Is this how people look at me?]

Ayesha took a peek at Jiang Chen and smiled tenderly.

"There was once an emperor who was generous, kind, and brave. His territory stretched from west of Thrace, east of Indian River Plain, north of Amu Darya to the south of Persian Gulf.

"He acted as a conqueror in Damascus but gained the respect of the people he conquered. The Egyptians built a city in the desert to honor his meritorious deed," she muttered to herself as though she's recounting a legend.

Hearing this, Jiang Chen suddenly burst out laughing.

"But the empire was only short-lived." Was she referring to Alexander?

Towards to this remark, she merely smiled and did not disprove.

Obviously, he could have just used bullets to suppress them, used their loved ones to threaten them, used force to make them surrender, made them live in tents, and made them live by his rules.

But he didn't. The living condition here was much better compared to the refugee camp. He even provided them with a salary and hope.

Feeling the warmth from his hand, Ayesha closed her eyes, her lips curved into a smile.

...

[What kind of joke is this? Trek across the desert?]

The refugees were abuzz with protest.

However, their objection fell on deaf ears as Ivan and the other instructors ignored the faces filled with righteous indignation and stood there like statues. The public outcry escalated but was cordoned off violent encounters.

Force would always be the best deterrence.

All the trainers wore a pitch back automatic rifle at their waist, the dark muzzle warned anyone who dared to incite violence.

Half an hour passed quickly.

Ivan cracked a smile and signaled his nine compatriots to surround the refugees.

...

In the command post, Jiang Chen and Robert stood side by side in front of the window while watching the situation in the field in good humor.

"Sh*t, didn't think that you'd have the gift of the gab," said Robert, his cigarette dangling in his mouth and his arms were resting on the windowsill.

"I have a lot of talent." Jiang Chen grinned, he was also leaning against the windowsill.

Rather than talent, it was more of unceasing practice. Three months ago, if he were to talk in front of more than 100 people, he doubted if he would be able a single word. And now, the did not even need to prepare a speech.

"Do you know what I was thinking when you were giving that speech?"

"What?" Jiang Chen casually asked, his eyes were still on the field.

A commotion started to break out in the field. Someone tried to grab Ivan's rifle but was easily suppressed with a single move.

"Hitler." Robert made an amusing version of Führer and laughingly remarked, "But you didn't learn his way of provocation. You should have given them a loaf of bread and tell them: 'You can eat it as long as you swear your allegiance to me.'"

"There was no need." Jiang Chen chuckled and got up from the window. "I've already given them enough incentives."

With that, he left the command center.

Staring at Jiang Chen retreating figure, Robert shrugged his shoulders and once again resumed observing the square.

There the riot was already over.

Perhaps due to the experience they gained in Kane which trained them to be an expert in suppressing uprisings, Ivan was able to lead his nine comrades to successfully control the situation.

Although the refugees wore a scowl on their face, they still obediently divided into ten columns, each led by a respective trainer. Their spouse and children were taken back to their assigned housing.

The training started immediately. The first mission was to run two laps around the 20 hectares of the base.

They would only be able to eat once they finished.

Don't want to cooperate? Then starve together with your wife and children.

If they only have themselves to think about, some of them would perhaps attempt to resist; however, hearing that it was not just them who would starve but also their family...

Everyone chose to compromise.

Under the scorching sun, figures could be seen running around the base, leaving trails of dust behind them.

When they dragged their exhausted body after finally finishing two laps, they all dropped to the ground. Not only did the ruthless instructors show not an iota of mercy, the devils also announced that the run would become part of their routine.

Although they wanted to complain, they couldn't muster enough energy to do so.

Fortunately, evening came which meant that the training for today was official over.

When they dragged their beaten body to the cafeteria with their family and received their share of a hot meal, they suddenly felt that it didn't seem to be so bad.

Roasted golden turkey, stewed mutton soup, bright green salad...

As far as food is concerned, it was day and night compared to those of refugee camps.

Maybe it was because of exhaustion after the exercise which stimulated their hunger, the dinner was especially delicious.

A lot of people even had extra portions, and Jiang Chen didn't skimp on food.

Hassan sat down beside his wife, Mary, carrying a bowl of

mutton soup, and then grabbed a bun, dipped it into the soup, and took a big bite.

Looking at her exhausted husband, Mary anxiously reached out to him and wiped the dust off his face.

"What did they make you do?"

"Other than running, not much, but who knows what they'll do later? Dammit, those trainers are simply inhumane," Hassan cursed as he devoured the food in front of him. Because he expended quite a significant amount of energy, his appetite was huge enough to devour a camel.

It was not clear whether it was intentional, but everyone there appeared to be a modern Christian, so there was no sign of veils and headscarves in the cafeteria.

Hassan was munching his chicken and bread, while he pondered about on the future.

He was 20 years old, his wife 19. They were planning to have a baby last year, but the conflict suddenly escalated overnight, as the shadow of IS enveloped half of Syria. Because he was considered a "heretic," he naturally did not dare to stay in his hometown, so he took his wife away and came to the refugee camp on the border.

Not knowing whether he should consider himself lucky or unfortunate for being taken here.

Becoming a mercenary? He never considered this position.

But now it seemed that there were not many options left for him.

"Will you... go to the front line?" Mary reluctantly asked.

"If I become a mercenary, probably," he grimaced and grunted as he stuffed his mouth with bread. He glanced at the trainers who were also having dinner in the cafeteria.

He was very confused about what would happen in the future.

But that 3-year contract gave him some hope.

"After 3 years, let's have a baby. I will work hard to give you and the children a stable environment," Hassan promised.

Mary stared at him, her eyes were covered with mists, and then she lowered her head shyly.

"Ok."

In any case, since his family was already here, he would just need to do his best for them.

He would just wait and see whatever happened in the future.

Hassan's thought reflected the thought of other recruits in the base.

At least for this meal alone, there's nothing to complain about.

Chapter 156: Finally going home

Early next morning, a team of ten men was running outside the base wall.

They were led by their respective trainers and would have stamina training 10 kilometers away from their location.

Jiang Chen's requirement for Ivan was he only had half a year regardless of what method he utilized. Six months later, he wanted to see disciplined and fast-moving troops. Moreover, this unit should be loyal to him alone.

It was easy to ensure the loyalty of the soldiers: first was money, and second was electronic collar.

Other than the job contract, Jiang Chen also signed a 10-year confidentiality agreement with the ten Kane instructors. Under the terms of the agreement, they must wear the electronic collar with information detection ability to protect themselves from information leaks in the entire duration of the term.

In this regard, the ten Kane trainers did not put up any resistance because it was only 10 years, and they did not have any intention of disclosing anything.

Six months' time was very short, it would be impossible to train a special force capable of a mixture of combat requirement, other new recruits would have to stay in camp for 7 months. Although relying on the virtual reality system for efficient training would

only require 1-2 months to complete the new recruit training regimen; however, in the absence of a basic foundation, carelessly bringing these high-tech products out in the open would be highly unwise, more so because he did not have 100 training equipment in the first place.

But of course, Jiang Chen also made it clear to Ivan that he didn't need a special force, but a competent and modern infantry capable of siege warfare. They didn't need to be able to execute special missions, merely being capable of fighting would suffice.

As for their combat ability, there were a lot of ways to make up for it.

Not enough stamina? Then give an injection.

An E-grade genetic vaccine was really cheap and common in the Sixth Street. Although it was not as powerful as Jiang Chen's C-grade injection, it was enough to improve their constitution to that of special force level. The only reason he did not inject them yet was he wanted them to train their perseverance and endurance. They would be given an injection over the course of training.

Although Ivan and the trainers were skeptical about the drug that could improve their physical shape, upon seeing the certainty in their boss, they finally believed it was real. In spite of their misgivings, after being injected, they were surprised to discover that their strength and reflex improved by leaps and bounds, only then their skepticism finally disappeared. They were now more confident with the 6-month deadline training mission.

Of course, Jiang Chen didn't tell them it was a genetic medicine. He only told them it was a mysterious Han medicine.

Mhmm, that's right, it's a traditional Han medicine.

To begin with, from a foreigner's perspective, Han medicine in itself was a very mysterious thing. And precisely because of its mysterious nature that he was not pressed to explain himself.

It was also worth mentioning that genetic vaccine functioned by fine-tuning the genetic sequence of somatic cells and stem cells without affecting genes in certain cells. In other words, there was no need to worry about genetic issues.

Bad marksmanship? Then make the technology shoot for you.

AK47? M4A1? Obviously, they won't be using these junks.

100 years in the future, these seemingly decent rifles would be extremely weak. Just like how Thompson submachine gun could still be used now, almost all new rifles could definitely outmatch its performance.

The 150 Reapers Assault Rifles that Jiang Chen brought from the Fishbone Base, whether its stability, penetration, and accuracy, it outshined all modern firearms. After all, there was a fundamental difference between the structure of warfare in the future and the present.

Even light infantries wore nano combat suits as well as kinetic skeletons. Not to mention the heavy infantries that were fully equipped with power armors. If the rifle penetration was low, it would be difficult to even penetrate the enemy's armor. Since this was a NATO standard Reaper assault rifle, its penetration capability was naturally unequivocal. Although it was normal in the future with highly advanced science, it was ridiculous in the modern world where it could easily penetrate through steel or concrete.

Logically speaking, the higher the explosive power, the more recoil the soldier would receive, but because of the special design of firearms, the recoil was significantly reduced.

Furthermore, because of its compact internal design, needless to say, the accuracy was superb.

The only problem was the ammunition. Because they couldn't use a modern ammunition without a secure base, Jiang Chen did not dare to move the bullet production line, so he could only carry the ammunition himself.

Fortunately, the trade between the Fishbone Base and the Sixth Street had just been finalized, and the additional batch of ammunition he purchased had arrived just in time. He shipped six months worth of training ammunition to the armory which temporarily solved the problem.

Other than rifles, with the development in the apocalypse side,

Jiang Chen would continuously transport even more ridiculously incredible equipment to this world.

Such as kinetic skeletons, heat sensor grenade...

Jiang Chen entrusted all responsibility of training to Ivan. The veteran was well-respected among his peers, and so he was more at ease in leaving him with the day-to-day operation of the base.

As for logistics, it was also easy to solve.

According to Robert's suggestion, he set up an office for the Future Security Company in Niamey and hired local experts to handle the problem. The only thing he needed to worry about was to provide the operating cash flow to the company's account, and the daily expenses, salary, and logistics, and other aspects of affairs would be coordinated by the office.

At the end of each month, there would be a detailed bill sent to his email.

...

After spending two days traveling between the base and Niamey, Jiang Chen finally settled everything on this side.

The manager of Future Security company was a man called Barkley whom he found in the talent market in Niger. Despite being only 35 years old, he already had 15 years of relevant work

experience. He looked stable and trustworthy.

The labor cost in Niger was very meager, \$400 USD monthly salary was already considered high in the local market. Towards such generous paycheck, the black guy was ecstatic as he promised to take care of everything with perfection.

Jiang Chen was pleased with his eagerness because it meant he could worry less about it.

With the base starting to operate on the right track, it was finally time to go home.

When they headed to the airport, they took Niger Ministry of Commerce vehicle. As a good host, the Minister of Commerce Amani personally sent them to the airport.

"We hope you come back soon, Mr. Jiang. You will always be Niger's friend." Armani shook hands with him enthusiastically with a bright smile on his face.

\$2 million worth of investment to build a road from the national highway to the undeveloped area. He had gained a lot from this friend of his from the East, and so he was naturally very enthusiastic.

"Of course, I wish our friendship will last through eternity. Thank you for your warm hospitality. Farewell." Jiang Chen released his hand and then led Robert, Nick, and Ayesha into the

airport.

After passing through security, Robert heaved a sigh of relief and rolled his eyes.

"I can finally leave this goddamn place. Heck, when I get back, the first thing I'll do is to take a nice, long shower and then go to the hospital to get a gastric suction."

"Then spread your seeds to some Hollywood chicks?" Jiang Chen teased.

"Ahem, of course, nightlife is necessary to relieve some stress at work, you know. The next time you come to Los Santos, I'll take you to experience it." Robert chuckled. "What about you? What are you planning to do when you get back?"

"Shower, sleep and then rest for a few days." Jiang Chen shrugged and sat on the chair in the waiting room. Ayesha sat right beside him, eyes looking everywhere. However, much to her disappointment, unlike the airport in Kiev, there was no magazine to pass her time on.

"Don't be so boring, you have to learn to enjoy life properly." Robert sat on the opposite side of Jiang Chen, crossed his legs, and leaned comfortably against the seat. "Then what's the use of making so much money?"

Nick scanned the lobby of the waiting room and then headed for

the coffee machine.

"Haha, how do you know I didn't enjoy myself? Let me tell you, when I made my first money, the first thing I did was to spend it lavishly," Jiang Chen said proudly, not in the least bit ashamed.

"Oh? I didn't expect this...Haha! By the way, buddy, I've got a fun idea. Why don't we share what we did with our first money?" Robert was suddenly interested and sat up straight.

Meanwhile, Nick came over with a coffee and sat down next to Robert.

"We'll get Nick to go first." Robert patted Nick on the shoulder while laughing.

Nick took a sip and looked at Robert with confusion. After hearing the explanation, the taciturn Slavic man gave the most ordinary statement.

"Bought a house in Los Santos and then got a dog." As far as American lifestyle's concerned, his couldn't be any more average.

"Okay, I take back what I said, Nick is the most boring person." He ignored Nick's confused look and then coughed and continued, "My turn...I remember it was five years ago, I was still helping a Mexican smuggled illegal firearms. On the day of payout, he gave me \$50 thousand, and the first thing I did was..."

At this point, Robert's face went red out of nowhere, scratched his nose, as he was too embarrassed to continue.

"Ahem. Uh, I found two 16 years old high school students at the bar... In short, I got rid of my...virginity." Robert had completely abandoned his sense of shame. He then looked at Jiang Chen, "Ok, buddy, your turn."

[This old pervert.] Jiang Chen laughingly thought in his mind.

"The first sum of money..." He wanted to say what happened in Sanya but suddenly halted as he awkwardly looked at Ayesha.

Uh, he seemed to be somewhat similar to Robert, the old pervert. After making money, the first thing he did was go to Sanya and got himself a lover.

Sensing Jiang Chen's gaze, Ayesha looked back at him puzzled.

However, her pure expression made it even harder for Jiang Chen to open his mouth.

Robert smirked and then whispered, "I understand, we're all men here."

"No, wait, my situation is a little different from yours." [In any case, saying it's his first...]

"No, no, no, no need to explain, I understand."

[Fu*k, what do you know!]

Chapter 157: I'll teach you fitness?

This past couple of days, Jiang Chen was very idle.

The first step of the island capture project had been completed, and Sixth Street had also been stabilized.

Out of nowhere, he suddenly found himself free.

He walked out from the bedroom, yawning. After a brief wash, he went to the kitchen and sat across Ayesha while stretching.

"Did you stay up late again?" Ayesha asked with concern.

"Uh, played a bit too late last night." Jiang Chen reached out and grabbed a slice of toast.

Coffee, toast, and omelet for breakfast, Ayesha's cooking was getting better...While munching, he reached out and turned on the TV.

"Don't sleep too late," Ayesha reminded softly.

"Mhmm." He took a sip of coffee, and the bitterness made his brain sober.

The widescreen TV was playing the news.

"Yesterday noon, a crossfire occurred in the northern suburbs of Donetsk, Ukraine, the largest one since the turn of the year. The civilian forces used cannons, self-propelled artillery, and other heavy weapons against the government-controlled area. Currently, Minsk Agreement is in name only. On the other hand, America accused Russia of deploying artillery on the border...

Watching blankly at the artillery bombardment on the news screen, Jiang Chen took a bite of the toast,

"Did they start fighting again?"

Truth be told, seeing the cannon homing on the screen could not be compared to the astonishment of seeing it in the frontline.

Ayesha appeared to be indifferent towards these things and was concentrating on her breakfast.

"I'm going rusty these days," Jiang Chen complained out of boredom.

Ayesha put the omelet on the toast, blew a few times, before taking a huge bite.

After hearing how Jiang Chen felt, she hesitated a little before suggesting, "How about I teach you a good workout?"

Workout?

Jiang Chen was stupefied.

"Eh? I've taken the injection, so even without exercise, I can still maintain my body in tiptop condition."

He simply had to praise the beauty of science and technology.

"Um, in addition to physical fitness, there are still other benefits to exercise such as maintaining your figure and keeping your body flexible," Ayesha muttered.

"Figure... Umm, speaking of this, I still haven't touched the fitness equipment that we bought. It's always you who have been using it." Jiang Chen scratched his chin thoughtfully and suddenly clapped. "Then it's decided, later you can teach me to exercise."

"Mhmm!" Ayesha smiled tenderly and nodded.

...

Shortly after breakfast.

The two stood face-to-face on the yoga mat. Ayesha had already changed into a workout outfit of a small black top, her brown color was tied into a ponytail.

Looking lively and enticing.

Curves outlined by tight clothes, bumps faintly visible...

Uh, guess it would be troublesome if he continued to stare.

Jiang Chen subtly moved his line of sight.

A dazzling selection of fitness equipment comparable to those of outside gyms was located on the third floor of the home gym. At the corner, a virtual reality training chamber could be seen, and before entering the password, it looked like an oddly-shaped, covered bathtub.

"Fitness is divided into two kinds, one is aerobic exercise such as treadmills and bicycles. The other is non-aerobic exercise such as sit-ups and weightlifting." Without noticing the strange look from Jiang Chen, Ayesha went to the next exercise equipment and started explaining earnestly.

When it came to exercise, she was naturally quite experienced. After all, she spent almost all her days in the gym. If it was not completing her daily "homework" in the virtual reality, it was using this equipment to exercise her body.

After listening to Ayesha explained the key concepts, the next step, of course, was the practical application.

Jiang Chen twisted his neck, as he eagerly stepped on the

treadmill and started it under Ayesha's guidance.

<Speed: 10>

[Um, I don't seem to be feeling anything.]

According to the value on the EP, his muscle strength was already at 30, his reflex was nearing 29, and thus this type of exercise was indeed too simple for him.

Impatiently, he pressed the plus sign button making the speed increased until it finally stopped at the limit of 30.

His feet were practically dancing, but he still didn't feel an iota of pressure.

"There's no point in running so fast," Ayesha smiled wryly.

"Why do I feel that this treadmill is pretty much useless to me?" Jiang Chen had a similar wry smile and pressed the minus button until the treadmill came to a slow stop.

After Jiang Chen got off from the treadmill, Ayesha took over. She took a deep breath and pressed the start button.

<Speed: 5>

"Although the injection of that weird medicine improved a lot of aspects of your body quite significantly, daily exercising to maintain your health is still important. Not so fast, jogging should suffice. This helps tone the body and keeps the body flexible..."

While jogging in constant speed, Ayesha was explaining it to Jiang Chen simultaneously.

Flexibility? Body coordination? Jiang Chen nodded thoughtfully.

But when he thought about body shapes...

For some reason, the first thing that came into his head was the sexy vest line of her waist.

And looking at her shoulders and arms moving rhythmically along with the jiggling of her firm and small breasts...

Not good! Nosebleed.

Jiang Chen embarrassedly covered his nose and quickly looked away.

A good thing that nothing came out of his nose.

Ayesha gave him a puzzled look. Done with her demonstration, she turned off the treadmill and jumped off.

"Now for the non-aerobic exercise. Um, where should we begin...Ah! Let's start with that." Looking around, her eyes lit up when she spotted the elliptical trainer near the door.

An odd-looking equipment connected to all four sides, which Jiang Chen had seen before in the university gym. Put simply, by sitting there, you can perform pull-ups, core exercise, parallel bars and other series of complex exercise.

"I rarely use this because it will easily build up muscles, but it's suitable for guys." Ayesha sat on top of it and smiled softly at Jiang Chen. "I'm going to demonstrate for you."

She adjusted the weight to 20 kg, took a deep breath, and extended both of her arms up high while holding the bar.

Too much power.

A weight of this level was naturally very easy for someone like her with a genetic vaccine, but even so...

Due to the tension made from the exertion of her arms, the round softness on her chest looked like it was about to pop out.

Jiang Chen unconsciously swallowed his saliva.

Although he knew it was bad to gawk at certain parts of a girl, still he was unable to move his gaze away.

However, this wasn't the most troublesome thing.

Having finished with the stretching exercises of her upper and lower muscles, Ayesha, who remained oblivious to his gaze, put her arms against the pad of the butterfly clips and then both of her arms snapped towards her chest.

Because of the pressure, the soft protrusion was squeezed under the force of her arms.

Worse still, because of the aerobic exercise, Ayesha's forehead was sweating profusely. The small top was becoming more transparent as it got stuck on her skin.

"What's the problem?" Ayesha looked perplexedly at Jiang Chen who was covering his nose.

"Uh, nothing, my nose is just a little bit itchy. Ha ha ha." Jiang Chen laughed dryly.

He did not want to admit that he was thinking of naughty things while she was teaching so earnestly.

While still confused, Ayesha didn't pursue the subject. She pressed her legs against the pad, ready to demonstrate the next set of moves.

However, at this time, she accidentally saw something she shouldn't have seen.

Because Jiang Chen was also wearing workout clothes, the design of the sports pants was rather loose.

That tent-shaped bulge...

Ayesha's cold face turned crimson, she ducked her head down shyly, fingers rubbing absentmindedly against the training equipment.

"Do, do you want to?" she uttered in a quivering voice.

Hearing this, it was Jiang Chen's turn to blush.

His conscience told him that he should refuse this time to show his integrity and solve this "misunderstanding".

"Yes," He nodded without thinking.

Although his thought was very praiseworthy, his mouth and body, on the other hand, were both very honest.

"Umm, then let's go to..."

"Here is good!"

"Eh?"

...

It's already lunchtime when they left the gym.

Seeing the time on the EP, Jiang Chen could not help but smile wryly.

Now with Ayesha feeling disoriented, she definitely would not be able to cook anymore.

What a blunder.

He shook his head and went into the kitchen.

He turned on the rice cooker, poured half a cup of rice into it, and mixed it with water.

Putting on the apron, he took a spatula and cooked the scrambled eggs with tomato, which he hadn't cooked for a long time, and then he made a cucumber soup.

This was the limit of his cooking, as he certainly didn't know how to cook lamb and beef.

But this should be alright for today.

He brought the dishes on the table while humming. He then returned to the kitchen and removed the dough from the fridge.

Ayesha was still not used to eating rice. It was usually Jiang Chen who ate rice, and she with her bread.

He stuck the dough into the microwave, patted his hand, and pressed the start button.

Watching the golden bread spinning in the microwave, he narcissistically touched his chin while nodding.

[Why am I so talented? Capable of doing business and capable of cooking...wait! This shouldn't be how a man is described!]

Just then, he suddenly felt a soft touch behind him. A small hand came around him from behind and embraced him.

"Hmm? Ahem, sorry, I've been too rough. Are you feeling better?" Jiang Chen said as he turned around and scratched his head awkwardly.

"Mhmm...thank you."

"Thank you? Eh? Wait, what are you crying for?"

Ayesha's face was tightly pressed against his warm back, she didn't respond and only rubbed the corner of her eyes against his clothes.

Just ten minutes ago, she slowly recovered from her woozy state.

When she realized it was already lunchtime, as a "competent wife", which she'd always strictly told herself to be, she immediately got up, leaned on the wall for support, and dragged her body to the kitchen.

When she saw the dishes on the table, for some reason, she felt her eyes tearing up.

She gently moved to the kitchen door and saw the hot bread that Jiang Chen made for her.

She stepped forward and embraced him, her face pressing tightly against the warm and strong back, and her delicate eyelashes closing.

"Uh, sorry for hurting you, in the future—"

"No, this is good." Ayesha murmured happily.

Chapter 158: A Popular Game

After lunch, Ayesha returned to the gym saying she was going to clean the place. After all, she had been injected with a genetic vaccine, and thus she was almost completely recovered at the moment.

Jiang Chen was sitting on the sofa while watching TV to pass the time. Yawning, he was about to get up and go back for a nap when his mobile phone suddenly rang.

He took out his mobile phone and read: Xia Shiyu.

He pressed the answer button and lazily put the phone to his ear.

"Hello? What's up?"

"Mhm, I have something to tell you. It's about a game," Xia Shiyu's excited voice came through which made Jiang Chen extremely surprised.

"I guess it's a good news." Jiang Chen laughed.

"That's right," Xia Shiyu leaned backed against the office chair with a rare proud smile appearing on her face. "After a period of marketing and beta testing, our company's first mobile game 'New Era' is now officially live! According to the recent daily statistics that had just been released, its first day of downloads exceeded 15-million mark, setting a record for highest downloads for mobile

games!"

After practicing in front of the mirror numerous times, when Xia Shiyu finally shared the good news with the boss, her voice still went off-key due to extreme excitement.

"What the fu*k!" The news practically made Jiang Chen jumped up from the sofa.

"Ahem, no cursing please," Xia Shiyu admonished lightly before continuing, "According to the server's data, the highest number of concurrent users broke through 5 million...it's better for you to come to the company this afternoon, so I can show you the back end stats directly."

"I'll be there right away." After saying that, Jiang Chen hung up the phone and was immediately out the door.

...

Wanghai University, men's dormitory.

A guy with a pair of glasses was staring at the screen of his mobile phone, his fingers moving swiftly on the touchscreen. His spectacles reflected the fighting scene of a roleplaying game character.

"Four eyes, what are you playing? Or are you watching porn?" Tian Zhongjie, his bunkmate, moved his chair closer and stretched

his neck to take a peek at his screen.

Tian Zhongjie had just finished playing 'League of Legends' and had almost smashed his keyboards because of those noobs. He was so angry that he didn't want to play anymore. After 20 losses, he closed the game directly, and then opened the file, and uninstalled the game.

This was his tenth time of uninstalling this game.

Most online games were either filled with RMB players (1) or filled with cheats. Although a lot of noobs played 'LOL', the quality of the game itself was still quite good. At least, the RMB skins wouldn't increase the user's attack damage. Thus, after his anger had abated, he would find himself unable to stop from downloading the game again. Despite that, every time he finished uninstalling, he would swear that he would chop his hand off if he ever installed it again.

Chen Hong cast his friend a sidelong glance before returning his gaze back to the screen and then controlled his character to the direction of the main city.

"What are you being so mysterious about?" Tian Zhongjie had just AFKed, so he had nothing better to do. He then got up and stood behind him.

Chen Hong ignored him and continued to stare intently at the screen.

Just then, the dormitory door opened and Gao Fei, who had just finished playing basketball, walked in.

"Yo, four eyes, didn't you say that only dumbass play mobile game? Then why are you playing it?" Gao Fei quipped. He curiously stood behind Chen Long trying to see what he was playing.

"What, no way! Is this truly a mobile game?"

As a result, Gao Fei was also unable to peel his eyes off the screen either.

The texture of the image, the detailed character design, as well as the spectacular gameplay, those 3D mobile games are nothing compared to this! No, not just mobile games, even 'Skyrim' on his desktop couldn't compare to this game!

"That's right, this is not a mobile game, and that's why I'm playing it," Chen Hongteng pushed his eyeglasses up and scowled at the completely stunned Tian Hongjie.

Gao Fei gulped and jeered, "The graphics is so good, the game content must be meh."

Chen Hong glanced at him before continuing, "Open world and 2:1 continental-scale map. It combined the adventure element of an RPG and the management element of an SLG. Player can choose to roleplay as an adventurer or become a lord managing a piece of

land. You can also open a business and become a merchant to fight pirates in the sea. Whether it's the graphics or the content, even if it's compared to PC games, it's a 3A godly masterpiece" Chen Hong said with absolute certainty. Although he had always been extremely critical when it came to games, he had yet to find any flaws in 'New Era'.

"Could your crappy phone even handle a map with a size of two continents?" Tian Zhongjie's jaw was about to drop to the ground, he felt like his 'LOL' addiction was still not beyond redemption!

"The game is only 300 MB."

"300 MB, you're pulling my leg!" Gao Fei uttered in complete disbelief.

"The company stated that they used the newest data compression technology as well as cloud computing technology...Anyway, I don't understand any of that stuff, I only can care about playing. O For a day, I consumed 10 MB of data, so it's not very high."

Chen Hong killed another monster and deftly picked up the loot of silver coins and equipment and then locked onto the next one.

"I can see that you have been killing monsters for a while now, don't you find that boring?" Tian Zhongji noticed that he had only been killing monsters after watching him play for a long time. Sure, the fighting scene and graphics were great, but wouldn't it be too boring to be hacking monsters constantly?

"Would you still feel bored if there's money involved?" Chen Hong responded to him as though he was talking to an idiot.

"Money?"

"RMB, you know that, don't you?" he added, sighing.

"What the fu*k, the in-game currency can be exchanged for RMB?" Gao Fei asked in disbelief, his eyes almost popping out.

"The game operator doesn't exchange gold coins, but they offer a platform similar to 'Diablo 3's' auction house. Players are free to price and sell gold coins on a consignment basis. This system is somewhat similar to the stock price, where the lower price is given preference. The game operator will only collect 5% commission fee, and they only take 10% commission for the equipment auction."

While speaking, Chen Hong's eyes were burning with passion like crazy.

"During beta testing, Future 1.0 distributed a high amount of activation code to VIP members. There's quite a number of wealthy players playing this game according to the official data collected during the beta phase."

"That's to say, there is a high probability that RMB players would beat your sorry ass." Gao Fei said in derision.

"That's how an average person would think." Chen Hong cast him a haughty look. "'New Era' didn't create an item mall. The purchased points can only be used to expand the warehouse or purchase skins that don't affect the balance of the game."

"In other words, it's similar to LOL's store?" Tian Zhongjie's eyes lit up, and he suddenly felt an urge to download and play the game.

Chen Hong ignored his friend's question and muttered, "Do you remember what I said before? There are many ways to play this game. You can be an adventurer, a lord and so on."

"Does it have anything to do with those RMB players?" Gao Fei asked, frowning.

"Of course!" Chen Hong's eyes were practically indistinguishable from gold coins. He licked his cracked lips before continuing, "The condition to become a lord is one has to buy a city lease for 100,000 gold coins and then get the city qualification. Imagine if you were a rich player, would you rather hunt monsters like what I'm doing, or would you rather become the lord of a city with countless followers?"

"That's nonsense!" Gao Fei scoffed, but he seemed to have suddenly thought of something as his eyes widened, "Wait, if the city lease costs 100,000 gold, the auction house..."

"That's right, if you play the game normally, it would be impossible to obtain 100,000 gold coins in such a short amount

time. Killing a single boar would only drop 2 silver coins and killing 50 would barely give you 1 gold coin. So to become a lord, the only way to acquire gold coins is through the auction house!"

"But would there be that many people willing to buy a city lease?" Tian Zhongjie asked.

"Let me give you a straightforward data. At present, the price of a single gold coin in the auction house is set to 5 RMB. So for every 10 boars I kill, I would make 1 RMB." The more Chen Hong talked, the more motivated he became.

"What the fu*k, a land lease will cost half a million RMB? That is insane!" Gao Fei uttered in disbelief.

"You noob, there are rich people who are not afraid to squander 1 million while playing 'Plants vs. Zombies'. Don't you know building a territory is similar to 'farming'? Moreover, through taxation, production of materials and other ways to earn money, would you still be worried about not making a return?"

"I'll tell you a rumor that I heard from one of my friends. Have you heard about Blood Sea guild of 'Sword 4'? Because of the popularity of 'New Era', they are planning to switch to this game. They are also currently raising funds in preparation for something big. Not only wealthy people, a lot of game workshops are also eyeing this city lease, so you can just imagine the future of this game."

"Isn't 'Sword 4' a PC game?" Tian Zhongjie could not help but ask

out loud.

"If the mobile game is more fun than PC game, would you rather play a PC or a mobile game? The future belongs to the mobile platform!" Chen Hong himself was becoming passionate about the future.

"Not only that, it can also be said that city building is the biggest feature of the game. The sandbox-like settings would allow the players to design their city based on their own preference. The city can be built anywhere from a certain distance from another city. And depending on the terrain and the map itself, the established city will receive a corresponding reward that would allow recruitment of special NPCs to attract other solo players.

"Do you know what this means? This means the earlier the city is established, the higher your advantage will be! You can get mines that produce iron ore, coastal areas fit for ships to dock, as well as unique NPCs roaming on the map...All major guilds are buying gold coins in order to seize those good spots!

"My plan right now is to kill monsters to gain gold coins and then sell the gold for money. Once I leveled up, I will explore the deeper parts of the continents. It'll be great if I can trigger some hidden mission. That would be really crazy!" An ambitious expression appeared on Chen Hong's face.

"But wouldn't the value of gold depreciate after a while if everyone purchased the city lease?" Gao Fei asked anxiously.

The reason why he was asking was because he suddenly had the idea of making money from the game. Just killing ten monsters would earn him 1 RMB. This was something really enticing for someone who doesn't have much pocket money.

"You're overthinking it. Wouldn't you need to build establishments after building a city? Wall, city hall, residential buildings, farm, ect., all of which cost money. In addition to city lords, there are sea explorers! Although putting up a shop would not cost 100,000 gold, a small shop would at least be 500. As for the mega vessel, it costs 1,000 gold and above."

The auction house wouldn't interfere with game content, and the difference between the demand for gold and RMB would prompt frequent trading between the players. As long as the operator continued to push new game contents which would prevent the value of gold from depreciating, the game would continue to survive.

Considering the impeccable game quality, the number of users, as well as the continued growth of Future 1.0...

Gao Fei's eyes turned brighter and brighter the more he thought about it.

"Four eyes, I have an idea. Why don't we, of dorm 101, start a game workshop..."

(1) RMB players: the equivalent of pay to win players.

Chapter 159: The Trap

Whenever Lingyu Technology's name cropped up, most mobile games fanatics would automatically think of games with unique designs and outstanding gameplay, such as 'I am ATM' and 'Dota History'.

Inside the Lingyu Technology building in Wanghai City, Ling Zhongtian was sitting in front of the office table with a dark face as he silently looked at the information on his table. The manager responsible for mobile game development, Qian Haiming, had his head lowered while sweating profusely and waiting for the boss' reprimand.

After a long while, Ling Zhongtian finally spoke.

"In one month, 'Dota History's' ACU dropped by 10% and KPI indices decreased by 17%...This is the goose that lays a golden egg you're telling me about? And what about 'I am ATM'? What's your team doing for the past month?" His voice was trembling due to rage.

ACU referred to the average concurrent users, while KPI referred to key performance indicators. The first was related to the sustainability of the game, while the latter was related to the game's profitability. At this moment, however, in front of him was a report that showed the stats of their two most profitable mobile games were in great decline.

[It was still fu*king okay last month!]

BANG! Ling Zhongtian threw the document in his hands on the table with great force, his lungs were on the verge of exploding due to anger.

The scolded Qian Haiming had a face of being greatly wronged. It was really not his fault.

Swallowing, he tried to organize his sentence in his head before explaining quietly to his boss, "Boss, this really cannot be blamed on us."

Taking a deep breath, Ling Zhongtian picked up the cup on the table to take a sip of tea, and gradually calmed the anger in his chest.

"It's that 'New Era', right?"

"Mhmm." Qian Haiming felt secretly relieved that the boss understood the situation, but the atmosphere remained tense as ever.

These two games of the company were very profitable, and 'Dota History' had a record of a staggering cash flow of 200 million per month. Although the result was somewhat watered down, it was not far off from the truth.

The issue had to do with 'Dota History', despite running for over a year, had nothing new to offer. Unlike PC games, mobile games'

real-time interactive capability was already very limited; thus, it was destined to severely limit the player's likelihood to stick to the game through social interaction. It could be said that when mobile game players quit the game, the reluctance to part with the game would be mainly due to the equipment and diamonds and not because of their good friends in the game.

After last year's success, the active users of 'Dota History' had been gradually decreasing. However, Qian Haiming had still a bit of skill, as he led the entire project team to devise numerous unique events which allow the KPI to barely hit the mark.

But who would have thought that a highly competitive game would take the market by storm and took a huge piece of the pie away?

Ling Zhongtian fell into a deep contemplation while looking at the report on the table.

As the president of a corporation, he obviously would not be clueless about the existence of the most promising mobile game in the market.

The game's massive content made it difficult for players to get bored due to repetitive gameplay.

It also offered real-time interaction comparable to that of PC games which meant that when players play the game, it really felt like an online game rather than playing just with a single list of friends.

And more importantly, how come it didn't consume a lot of data?

Ling Zhongtian was so jealous that he wanted to spew forth profanity, or perhaps he had already cursed in his mind.

The three points above were the major limitations of today's mobile game development. All major game developers that wanted their share of the market were racking their brains to come up with the best possible solutions to overcome these three major hurdles.

Too much game content? If users saw a game with a few gigabytes, they would be too lazy to download it. High hardware specs? This would cause lag and make the phone hot. High data usage? This might make telecom companies happy, but this would definitely enrage the users; thus, the game would naturally be unable to survive.

How to use software packers to include more game contents that most of the mobile phones would be able to run, and would not consume too much data. This has always been a great source of concern in the industry.

Fortunately, came a software which realized the inspiration of many programmers.

It was Future 1.0.

By simplifying the algorithm, the performance of mobile phones was increased by three times, and energy consumption was reduced twice as much. This would undoubtedly enable them to recapture the ideas that had been cut off before.

Ling Zhongtian was indeed a man with foresight. When he saw the download record of Future 1.0 continually being refreshed, he immediately issued instructions to Qian Haiming to gather people from project development team to develop high specs "large-scale mobile game".

The idea was undoubtedly insane.

At present, there was not a single mobile game that could meet the standard of the so-called "large-scale mobile game" in the market despite every developers' bluff and bluster. To deploy a large amount of technical resource to venture into an entirely unknown market was unquestionably a huge gamble.

The reason for making such decision was because he was able to foresee the change in the future of the development of mobile games.

Given how Future 1.0 had turned out, the future would have high-quality games with high resolution and rich, diverse game contents that could compete with PC games to fill the gaps in the current market. PC and console games would continually be pushed out of the market, and the mobile game industry would only going to get bigger. The only thing he needed to consider was how to gain the upper hand and acquire a bigger slice of this pie.

However, his ambition was already deflated before it was realized.

Turned out that Future 1.0 had a far greater ambition.

Before they gained a foothold in the market, they quickly launched an independent game and ventured into the mobile game market.

'New Era'?

In the beginning, Ling Zhongtian had not given their promotion of: "open game world", "sandbox game map", "the strongest freedom in history" much thought yet...

Who didn't know how to brag? Which developers did not vaunt their own game? Not just the players, even their own marketing staff didn't believe in the marketing.

But when the game went online, Ling Zhongtian's expression instantly turned green with envy.

He heard a lot of empty promises before, but it was his first time seeing all the promises got fulfilled.

Its unbelievable game quality set a whole new record in terms of gameplay. With the support of the Future 1.0's user base, 'New Era'

took the market by storm with no less than the impact that Future 1.0 produced and once again become a hot topic of the media. Future 1.0 made headlines again.

Without a doubt, 'New Era' had seized the initiative and took the lead in this market, which he had such high hopes for.

"How are things going on your end?" Ling Zhongtian no longer reprimanded Qian Haiming, and instead asked about the "large-scale mobile game" that was currently under development.

Hearing this, Qian Haiming looked inconceivably bitter.

"It is almost developed and currently in alpha phase, but compared to 'New Era'..."

As the project manager, no one knew better than him the product his own team was developing.

If the quality was almost comparable, he would at least try to boost his own project by a bit to let the boss see they really tried and achieved some results, however, after personally playing 'New Era' for a few hours...

Mhmm, he went on playing for a while, and it was undoubtedly fun that he couldn't help but expand the warehouse.

They had completely lost.

"Ino hard, just do everything you can to utilize your ability and creativity. Try a bit harder in the operations," Ling Zhongtian advised exhaustedly as he rubbed his temples.

"Yes, boss." Qian Haiming nodded and quickly left the office.

Elbows on the table, Ling Zhongtian stared at the report blankly.

He's already 50 years old, and regardless how tough his body was, his temple already had a white streak on it. After being in business for so many years and starting with only a handful people in a 10-sqm studio to gradually becoming the industry leader in the mobile game development, it was his first time experiencing such troublesome issue.

What made it troublesome was not the game itself, rather the chain reactions that came with it.

The mobile game industry was huge, too big to imagine, so no matter how voracious the appetite of the Future Technology was, it would be impossible to completely dominate the industry. In most users' phone, it would be impossible not to have more than one game. Thus, even if they lost the "large-scale" game market, Lingyu Technology still maintained a strong market share within the industry.

However, with the emergence of this large-scale mobile game, users' spending habits would undoubtedly have a huge impact. Lingyu Technology's continuous profit decline during this period

was a clear indicator of this problem.

Similar to the analogy that if you have an excellent game on your phone, would you still pay for a game like Tetris? Even if you did, it probably wouldn't be much.

The mobile industry had been divided for the longest time where everyone had similar games comparable to one other, and not one company had been able to monopolize the market.

However, that was before that game was launched.

'New Era' quickly gathered all players who were already bored with monotonous mobile games in the market. It revolutionized the perspective of users about the mobile games having "monotonous content" and "poor real-time interactive capability".

[Since the inception of this game, their days began to become difficult. and from the looks of it, it's not only Lingyu Technology's that got the short end of the stick...] while Ling Zhongtian mulled this over, he lightly tapping on the table with his finger.

[Perhaps it's high time to give this "rookie" a lecture?]

While thinking of this, Ling Zhongtian grimaced. He picked up the phone and called his old rival.

"Hello, Wang Zong. Haha, how have you been?"

"Ok, enough chitchat. It's been a tough day for everyone. Don't you think we should do something..."

Shifting the public opinion, providing funds for development of hacks, exploiting 'New Era's' vulnerabilities, hiring hackers to attack the server...

There were still many things they could do to preserve their interests.

Just be careful not to get caught in the act.

Ling Zhongtian hung up the phone, his mouth curved in a sneer.

[Regardless how powerful Future Technology is, how would they be able to ward off attacks from all sides?]

Chapter 160: What's a National Husband?

Driving to Guanglu Building, Jiang Chen closed the door and narcissistically looked in the car mirror before striding towards the front door.

He was slightly embarrassed—as the president, he was fairly certain that he came to the company not more than ten times.

Most of the companies that chose Guanglu as their office space dealt with information technology, similar to Future Technology. The commonality between them all was that their lunch breaks were really short. It was only 1:30, but there was nobody to be seen in the lobby. Just as he was about to take the elevator up, he heard his name.

"It's Jiang Chen?"

"Mhmm, seems like it is him...."

Hearing the gossipy discussions, Jiang Chen dumbfoundedly looked over at the lobby reception.

Two female receptionists whispered to each other as they giggled. When they noticed Jiang Chen looking over at them, they didn't stop but rather waved at him.

"Hey, Yingying, he looked over."

"Wait, let me send a Weibo!"

Weird.

Jiang Chen muttered to himself as he got on the elevator.

When the elevator stopped on the twelfth floor, a proud smile surfaced on his face as the words <Future Technology> came into view.

Three months ago, Future Technology existed only in Xia Shiyu's word document, but now it had already grown to this scale.

He made a beeline towards Xia Shiyu's office.

Sitting behind the front desk was a beautiful girl. Jiang Chen didn't recognize her; she was most likely one of the new hires. As for the previous two receptionists, they must have been transferred to other departments.

Compared to when the company just started, the number of employees had already doubled. Considering the company's new project team, Xia Shiyu went ahead and rented the thirteenth floor to be used by the <New Era> team.

When the beauty sitting at the front desk saw Jiang Chen, her eyes immediately lit up as she greeted him with a cheerful smile.

"Hello, President! Welcome!"

"What welcome," Jiang Chen casually said as he laughed and greeted her. Afterwards, he asked, puzzled, "You're new here, right? How did you know that I'm the president?"

On the left of her chest was a name tag that read "Su Mengqi."

"President, don't you know that you're extremely popular right now?" With both elbows on the table, Su Mengqi smiled.

Her voice had a unique tone that made others feel peaceful. Xia Shiyu indeed had an eye for choosing people. With a talent like this, after some training, she'd be great in the sales department.

"Popular?" Jiang Chen looked lost for a moment. While he knew he was considered a public figure, he didn't think he was popular.

When he came out of the airport a few days ago, he didn't see any cameras pointed at him.

"Haha, when is the last time President went online? Oh, I remember you have a Weibo account, unless that one is fake?" Su Mengqi asked curiously.

"Uh, I do have Weibo, but how did you know?" Jiang Chen took out his phone and logged into his long-forgotten account.

He recalled that the only person he followed was Liu Yao. After that, he didn't bother sending out a single Weibo. But when his eyes landed on the numbers, he jumped.

<Followers: 8.21 million. Following: 1>

"Hehe, I am also your follower." Su Mengqi shook her phone as coyly blinked her eyes. "Everyone calls you National Husband."

"Huh?" Jiang Chen glanced over the rows of at symbols, dumbfounded.

He randomly opened a few. It was either "I want to make babies with you," or "Please notice me, I can warm the bed." Many passionate females added a selfie in the message, but most belonged to the type that had "no photoshop at all."

Jiang Chen was secretly shocked at his popularity.

But he would pass on the babies part.

It made sense, however—Future Technology was now valued at over five billion USD by Wall Street analysts, and this was the number given to the press a month ago. After the introduction and success of their revenue model, as well as the era-defining game New Era, Future Technology's value could easily have doubled.

Without exaggerating, Jiang Chen's net worth was easily over ten billion USD.

Moreover, he was quite good-looking, and someone revealed that he was only twenty-three years old.

New to the business, young and rich, and also single—

Immediately, all spotlights were focused on him.

Even without sending out a single Weibo, social media officials acted on their own and verified the account, making the number of followers explode.

Uh, he was very curious. How did the Weibo officials know about his Weibo account?

"What do you think? It's not bad to be popular, right?" Su Mingqi smiled happily at Jiang Chen.

"Not bad." He scratched his nose while laughing shyly.

His sudden public stature felt surreal.

"Hehe, oh yeah. President, you still don't have a girlfriend, right? I'm also single. Do you think I can pursue you?" Su Mengqi coyly said in a half-joking tone of voice.

Just as Jiang Chen was about to reject her, a light cough transmitted from the end of the hall.

Xia Shiyu was standing there.

Her silky, black hair was pulled up, and her black suit was paired with a white dress shirt, black stockings, and a black pencil skirt. She demonstrated the office lady vibe to perfection.

Still stunning.

Su Mengqi playfully popped her tongue out and immediately put her phone away. It was evident that Xia Shiyu was well-respected in the company.

"Don't use your phone at work. Remember this next time." After giving Su Mengqi a brief lecture, Xia Shiyu glanced at Jiang Chen. She paused before saying, "Haven't seen you in a long time." Her tone somehow seemed to carry a hidden bitterness.

Jiang Chen said apologetically, "Uh, I was about to go find you."

"Then follow me." Xia Shiyu nodded, then she turned around to lead the way to the office.

After the two left, Su Mengqi patted her chest with relief.

Her best friend walked over with a briefcase and gently tapped her.

"Qiqi, do you have a death wish? You dared to hit on the president in front of the CEO?"

"Hmm? What! Could they...." Su Mengqi's eyes suddenly popped out as she realized the relationship between the two.

Her best friend Li Fengying whispered mysteriously, "Let me tell you since you're new and don't know. The reason why the CEO still hasn't found a boyfriend yet is because of President Jiang...."

"W-what do I do then? Will CEO Xia make trouble for me over this?" Su Mengqi began to feel anxious. She didn't actually plan to pursue Jiang Chen; it was only a joke. If she got in her boss' bad books, it would not be good.

Future Technology's salary and benefits were extremely competitive.

Her best friend suddenly burst out laughing.

"You dare to laugh. Give me back my Haagen Dazs." Su Mengqi said with mock anger.

"No, haha, don't worry, CEO Xia is not that type of person. She usually looks serious, but she's not the narrow-minded type to give you trouble."

If Jiang Chen heard this word, he would have a shocked expression.

Xia Shiyu did exactly that to fire him.

So people do improve?

Chapter 161: Hacker Attack

"This is our backend data." Xia Shiyu leaned down to press a few buttons on the laptop, then she turned the screen towards Jiang Chen with a rare prideful look displayed on her face.

It was the server management system designed by Yao Yao from which server activities were monitored.

25.27 million registered users.

The number wasn't overly high, considering Future 1.0 was a one-person-one-account registration system. Therefore, <New Era> was linked to Little White, which didn't allow fake accounts.

This made it so that the number reflected the number of people actually playing the game, unless they had multiple phones.

The reason behind eliminating smurfs was simple—to avoid having people open multiple accounts with the intent to disturb the economy within the game and use up server resources. <New Era> operated on one server in the entire country and used cloud computing to transfer calculation data from the client to the server. Even with Yao Yao's magically modified server, there was an inordinate amount of stress placed on it.

"The peak concurrent users have hit 15.03 million and the average concurrent user number is 8.14 million. It's nothing short of a miracle." Xia Shiyu couldn't seem to stop talking.

"What about the profit?" Jiang Chen immediately asked.

He was concerned about their new revenue model. Would such an innovation fit the market? He knew the game was online for just two days which was too early to tell, but he still couldn't help but ask.

Xia Shiyu smiled and clicked the screen.

"This is the current total auction amount, already exceeding 14 million. With a five percent commission fee, revenue has reached 700 thousand within the first twenty-four hours of operation."

"So much?" Jiang Chen was shocked.

He wasn't surprised by the revenue within the last twenty-four hours but rather by the auction amount of 14 million. It reflected the people's interest in game-spending.

"And it'll only increase." Xia Shiyu's voice was emotional, her voice trembling. "The player's current method of obtaining gold in the game is still slow, making a huge gap in demand. The current ratio of gold to RMB has even risen to a high price of 1 to 5.6."

Jiang Chen's initial reaction to Xia Shiyu's words was to pause. He didn't allow joy to overwhelm his thoughts; rather, he became more cautious.

"Do you think someone is manipulating the auction house price? Just like with stocks—prop it up high, get players to accumulate gold, and then massively over-flood the market?"

Hearing Jiang Chen raise his concern, Xia Shiyu's eyebrows also tensed.

"I've already considered this possibility, but for now, the operations department has yet to come up with a workable plan. Some suggested that we follow the rules from the Chinese stock market and establish a circuit breaker in gold exchange prices to prevent market manipulation. Some proposed establishing a bank organization within the game internally so that once the gold rises above a tolerable range, they would sell or purchase back the gold. But both of these solutions have their own pros and cons and are still under debate."

Hearing this, Jiang Chen almost burst out laughing.

"Are you planning on changing the epic magical genre into a financial one?"

Xia Shiyu seemed lost.

"Ahem, just joking around. Let's get to the main point. We can look at the broader economic balance in the game. Since the auction house is similar to securities, how could a bunch of game operators come up with a solution? We can follow what Valve did with DOTA 2—hire someone studying finance to monitor the auction house."

Hearing his suggestion, Xia Shiyu's eyes lit up. The problem that hounded her was solved with a simple sentence, making her consider him a few more times.

"Why are you looking at me?" Feeling slightly shy from her gaze, Jiang Chen scratched his nose.

"I just realized that you're actually quite smart." She smiled, and it was like a beautiful flower blossoming on her gorgeous face.

Dazzled by this brief glimpse, Jiang Chen jokingly replied, "I also just realized that you're quite beautiful when you smile."

Xia Shiyu blushed and coughed before hastily changing the topic.

"Mhmm.... On the other hand, based on the current skins available in the store, there has only been 150 thousand in revenue, but this number is expected to steadily increase. Also, after the one-time warehouse expansion, just on the first day of operation alone, it managed to rake in an impressive 4.21 million. However, this number is expected to drop as the number of new users decreases. These are the operational results from the past two days."

As she spoke, Xia Shiyu opened another window to show to Jiang Chen.

The revenue from the first two days was 10.41 million. Seeing

this number, Jiang Chen couldn't help but gasp. From this result, <New Era> easily destroyed the majority of mobile games that made that much in a month. If they maintained this upward trend in profit and user base, it wouldn't be a stretch to say <New Era> would break a monthly revenue of 200 million.

Subtracting costs and tax expenses, this revenue combined with Future 1.0's made Future Technology a mega-corporation with a 50 million monthly profit.

Jiang Chen was so ecstatic when he heard the news that he immediately declared a bonus of ten thousand to everyone in the operating team.

"With a boss like you who gives out bonuses so frequently, the project team can just depend on those bonuses." Xia Shiyu smiled at Jiang Chen's ecstatic expression.

Jiang Chen laughed. "Then the employees would want me to check up on them every day."

Just as Xia Shiyu was about to mock him by saying, "Then why don't you come by every day," the laptop on the table flashed a red alert symbol.

Jiang Chen was confused, but Xia Shiyu sighed as if it wasn't a big deal.

"This already the twelfth time today. They were heavily grouped

around the morning hours, but then here we go again.

"Network being infiltrated?" Jiang Chen frowned.

"That's right. It was more frequent yesterday." Xia Shiyu continued, "In the beginning, our programmers were highly focused on dealing with the attacks, but when we found that they couldn't even break past the server firewall, we began to ignore it. Speaking of which, how can we get rid of this alert? It always forcefully increases the volume and stays in the middle of the screen."

[It would be funny if they managed to infiltrate the firewall], Jiang Chen muttered in his mind.

"Ahem, I'll get the overseas team to make some adjustments." He only had to have Yao Yao tweak it, very simple.

As Jiang Chen and Xia Shiyu ignored the hacking alert on the laptop, in an apartment 100 kilometers away was a man in a black tracksuit. He resembled a zombie with his deep eye sockets as he typed furiously on the keyboard.

The veins on his arms were abnormally prominent, and his bloodshot eyes seemed as though they would pop out at any time. A pallid face showed from beneath his hoodie and with his small figure, he looked underage from all perspectives. The typing speed he demonstrated, however, would embarrass any professional writer.

Of course, he was not a professional writer but rather a hacker.

"How can this be possible, how can this be possible!"

Lines of code—or at least, lines of error codes—were reflected on his pupils.

The typing stopped when the screen flashed multiple red crosses.

No matter how many times he tried, it was the same result. They had to have a security team of at least ten professionals.

As soon as his hands left the keyboard, the room quieted down, and all that could be heard was the humming of the computer fans.

"Ahhh, can't beat it." Xie Lei raised his head, and he sank into the chair feeling defeated. He stared blankly at the ceiling as he mumbled, "It's only fair. If they could do something as insane as artificial intelligence, there's no way their security would be terrible."

Bored, he took out his phone and poked Little White's stomach. Seeing him giggle adorably, Xie Lei genuinely laughed.

Honestly, he didn't hold any animosity towards Future Technology.

[To be able to develop such a fun software....]

At that moment, the phone suddenly rang. When he saw who the caller was, his smile cooled considerably.

<Caller: Black Dragon>

"Hello?" Xie Lei said grimly upon picking up.

"How's the job you're working on?" Black Dragon laughed.

Black Dragon was obviously not his name, but if a hacker exposed his identity, it would be the same as stripping naked and running out onto the street. Which of them didn't do anything illegal before? Exposure meant "death."

". . ."

With the knowledge that they controlled "evidence," Xie Lei's face twisted for a moment before he took a deep breath. "Future Technology's security is too strong. No matter how hard I try, I can't go around the firewall. You're also in the business. You should know how difficult—"

"Can't do it?" Black Dragon interrupted. "My suggestion is for you to take it more seriously. This is for an important person. Based on our longstanding relationship, I'll give you twenty thousand allowances after this is finished," he said slowly.

"Twenty thousand? Since when are you so generous?" Xie Lei mocked.

Black Dragon, who was usually too cheap to give a few thousand, was now offering twenty thousand? The client this time must have offered more than a million.

"Don't bullsh*t me. If you don't want it, fine, I was only pitying you and you mock me? Let me tell you, Green Bird, or Xie Lei, if you don't do a good job, just wait for the cops to show up at your door."

After finishing, Black Dragon hung up.

Taking a deep breath, Xie Lei flung the phone to the side and buried his head between his knees. Green Bird was a renowned name among hackers, but it was useless. The Xie Lei in front of the computer screen was only an ordinary teenager.

"Dammit!"

His smashed his fist onto the table.

On the phone screen, Little White curled back anxiously. He couldn't see Xie Lei's expression since the camera was covered, but he could detect agony from the sound waves.

Just as Xie Lei was despairing, a tiny hand patted his head.

"Brother?" a young girl stood behind him and whispered.

Her face was similarly pallid, but it looked graceful in a way that healed when seen. The only unfortunate part was that she had no color in her pupils.

She couldn't see.

Xie Lin, his sister.

Xie Lei placed his hand on hers and tightly held onto it with a forced smile.

"Don't worry, Brother is here."

Even though he knew she couldn't see, he struggled to smile.

The girl continued to smile gently.

"Don't tire yourself out."

Seeing the bright smile on his sister's face, there was only remorse in his heart.

"Listen to Brother. I got another deal. The boss is generous and offered twenty thousand in compensation."

"Woah, Brother is so impressive." Her hands clasped together in front of her chest as she slightly opened her mouth in surprise.

"Mhmm, your brother is really impressive.... Therefore, I will heal your eyes." Xie Lei desperately kept his tone normal while his fingers tightly clenched onto the armrests.

He was not afraid of going to jail. He was done with Black Dragon's manipulation.

But what stopped him from going was his sister Xie Lin. If he went to jail, his only source of income would disappear. Not only would he be unable to treat her eyes, it would also be difficult to live....

He took a deep breath, his mind already made.

Although the hope was slim, he had to take a gamble.

Chapter 162: Company Gathering

When Jiang Chen announced a bonus of ten thousand for everyone, the employees all began to cheer in joy.

Xia Shiyu who stood beside him rubbed her face. She whispered, "Didn't you say a bonus only to the New Era project members? How did it become everyone?"

Hearing that, Jiang Chen paused before immediately laughing it away. "That's fine! Everyone contributed, so everyone should be rewarded. There are a lot of employees in Future Technology, but no one is an extra!"

"Boss." Chen Lulu in the legal department put her palms together as if she was praying to Jiang Chen.

"What?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"You look like you're glowing."

At the edge of the circle, Su Mengqi stopped clapping along with her colleagues.

As she watched Jiang Chen, who was surrounded, there was a different light flashing in her eyes, like a magpie that had just discovered shining jewelry.

"Girl, are you thinking about someone?" her friend said with a smirk. She stood beside Su Mengqi and poked her friend in the arm.

"Fengying," Su Mengqi murmured, as if she hadn't heard her friend's words.

Seeing the lost face on her friend's face, Li Fengying looked at her confusedly.

"What?"

"Who do you think is prettier? Me and CEO Xia?" Su Mengqi said with a pout, her eyes drawn to the person in the center.

"Psh! Wait? You...."

"I have decided!" She suddenly clapped her hands, a fighting light burning in her eyes. "I've changed my mind."

Future Technology had a total of 34 employees. With a bonus of ten thousand per person, that came out to only 340 thousand—this was a drop of water in the vast sea of Future Technology's future profits. Following the growth of the company, their monthly salary would eventually be far greater than that number.

But what Jiang Chen didn't know was that the employees were touched not by the ten thousand bonus but rather by what he said at the end.

"There are a lot of employees in Future Technology, but no one is an extra!"

Nothing else instilled such a sense of belonging as having one's own value recognized. They spent days and nights drafting plans, discussing marketing strategy, and handling the details of the operation—other than working for the salary, did they not want to be recognized for their values?

No one felt this as strongly as Jiang Chen did ever since he was fired at will. He was a small employee working in the sales department of a clothing store. He knew in his heart the powerless feeling that no matter how hard he worked, he would never receive any recognition.

Sometimes, people were more easily touched than expected.

These words were later printed in Future Technology's employee manual as the company's culture used to encourage new employees.

But this is an afterthought.

...

With everyone's moods at an all-time high, Jiang Chen immediately announced a gathering at Xinrong Restaurant, with all expenses paid for by the company.

A boss this generous naturally received the praise of the employees. Most people disliked business gatherings, but upon hearing that they would have the opportunity to have a meal with the mysterious but legendary boss, they began to look forward to it.

After getting off from work, the group of thirty plus people arrived at Xinrong Restaurant.

Befitting its five-star reputation, Xinrong Restaurant was magnificently built.

Xia Shiyu had already reserved a room, so when the restaurant manager saw the crowd of thirty people, he put on his brightest smile and personally ushered them to the private room. He also courteously gave Jiang Chen a VIP card that gave 20% off the tab.

The dinner table was a bustling scene.

Jiang Chen happily accepted his employees' toasts, but considering that he had to drive, he took care not to drink too much and placed the remainder in the storage dimension.

Sitting beside him was the second-in-command, Xia Shiyu. Jiang Chen was surprised to find that she was quite popular in the company as she received many proposed toasts as well.

Xia Shiyu accepted them all without refusing a single one, but

because of her tolerance, she used a small cup. Regardless, her face turned red after a few shots, which couldn't look more attractive on her.

The mood became heightened as Jiang Chen didn't act like a boss at all, boasting instead with the employees about anything and everything.

The topic soon turned to personal questions about the "internet famous" president's personal life. Everyone was quite curious.

"President, let me propose a toast. I wish for your greater success!" At this time, Su Mengqi stood and raised her cup with a smile.

Based on the alcohol culture in China, it was disrespectful to propose a toast to the boss before the direct manager did so. Because of the lack of employees, however, Future Technology did not yet have an established Human Resources department, and so Xia Shiyu was in charge of everything; therefore, Su Mengqi's direct manager should have been Xia Shiyu.

But CEO Xia, either from shyness or other concerns, didn't propose a toast to Jiang Chen from the start of the dinner until now, despite sitting beside him. Despite that, Su Mengqi toasting Jiang Chen did not benefit the culture.

Of course, there was also an unwritten rule that beauties were the exception.

"I'll accept your kind words." Jiang Chen stood and also raised his cup before throwing back the drink. Su Mengqi simultaneously finished the drink in her cup, and two red clouds appeared on her cheeks. Her watery eyes shimmered. Under the influence of alcohol, she gazed into Jiang Chen's eyes and asked, "President, can I ask you a question?"

"Ask away, as long as it's not for my bank password," Jiang Chen laughed as he joked.

"Then my question is, does President have anyone he likes?"

It was a bold question, drawing a wave of chattering, and the mood at the dinner table was suddenly pushed to a climax. Su Mengqi's face with light makeup began to blush even more under the cheers of her colleagues, but her watery eyes didn't move away.

Many people speculated that CEO Xia had feelings for the president, but when she remained unperturbed by the question, people began to question their suspicions.

Everyone was already an adult; there was no way she was this reserved.

"Yes, President. If you don't tell us because we're men, then shouldn't you reveal some information to the beautiful lady?"

"Yes, yes, our Miss Su is already giving you hints, so you should say something."

Recalling that the president was still single, the crowd began to root for the two.

Su Mengqi was indeed a gorgeous girl, and she seemed interested in the president. Many times, it worked out like this—although they didn't hold strong feelings for each other, under everyone's influence, they would somehow develop feelings for each other.

It was a top priority to help the president stay away from the single life. If it ended up working out, their fussing now would become an assistance later! Not only were there benefits, but in the future, it would be a favor. If they ended up getting married, with Jiang Chen's generosity, a hefty red envelope would come their way.

And even if it didn't end up working out, it was a light jest at the dinner table, so not many thought too deeply on it. For some reason, Xia Shiyu buried her head and poked at her fish, feeling wronged. She had the urge to stand up and do something, but she didn't know exactly what, so she couldn't find a reason to get up.

Jiang Chen gave a troubled smile. This was a difficult question to answer.

Sun Jiao and Yao Yao.... were from the other world. Ayesha's identity and age were unique, so it wasn't good to expose them. Liu Yao was a celebrity and would not be good to expose as a mistress. F*ck, he thought he had so many girls, but not a single one could be brought home for New Years.

"Uhh, yes?" After careful deliberation, Jiang Chen gave an incredibly vague answer.

Even after hearing the response, Su Mengqi didn't give up. Just as she was about to ask, "What do you like about her," Future 1.0's Project Manager Nin Huajian suddenly stood and proposed a toast with a smile.

"President Jiang is young but achieved! I have worked in the IT industry for five years and have seen a number of industry prodigies. But the only person whom I respect from the bottom of my heart is President Jiang. I'll finish the drink."

Nin Huajian chugged the alcohol in his cup and flipped it to show his respect, making the crowd cheer.

Jiang Chen understood that Nin Huajian was helping him get out of an awkward situation, so he gladly raised his cup.

After Jiang Chen finished his drink, the three sat down.

Su Mengqi also realized that she was rushing it. Thankfully, Nin Huajian saved her from persisting, or else she would have committed the taboo of putting her boss in a difficult situation.

Besides Su Mengqi's anxious emotions, Xia Shiyu's heart was also turbulent.

She recalled the scene during the last press conference.

At that time, Jiang Chen seemed to have indicated that he didn't like anyone.

But there now there was someone.

Who could it be?

He barely showed up at the company this month and barely saw her. Could it be someone he met overseas on a business trip...?

Eh? Why do I care about his personal life?

Just as Xia Shiyu was in a mental quandary, the topic at the table switched directions.

"CEO Xia, thank you for your support and guidance. Let me propose a toast to you."

Jiang Chen gently poked Xia Shiyu with his elbow.

"Ah! Okay...." As if waking from a dream, Xia Shiyu hastily stood and raised her cup.

Jiang Chen looked at Xia Shiyu, perplexed. It was rare to see such a frantic expression on her face.

In this relatively harmonious atmosphere, the dinner came to an end.

Chapter 163: Please close your eyes at night

After the closing remarks of the boss, the dinner officially concluded. People began to leave and started to head home.

The total spending was 70 thousand. Jiang Chen swiped his card without a blink of an eye.

But just as he was about to leave, he realized that someone was still there.

Xia Shiyu was leaning on the table. Her blood, red blush could be faintly seen on her half exposed face, she looked like she drank too much.

Seeing this, Jiang Chen helplessly let out a sigh and walked towards her.

For some strange reason, the girl somehow started to drink shot after shot and got herself drunk. She didn't cause a scene after becoming drunk as she just quietly lied on the table till now.

"No one forced you to drink, did you think you were drinking water?"

"Huu-"

Jiang Chen put her arms around his neck and used a slight

amount of force to lift her up onto his back.

Feeling the softness on his back, Jiang Chen's face turned red. Although they were not big, they were surprisingly soft.

He quickly coughed to hide his awkwardness as he cleared his mind. Avoiding the dubious look of the waitress, he quickly secured her on his back and left through the door.

"I, I am not drunk, taxi..."

"Yes, yes, that's what all drunk people say."

The warm breath on his neck made his mind go elsewhere, especially coupled with the softness on his back; it was making him lose his mind.

.

He suppressed the wild thoughts in his mind as he strenuously stuffed Xia Shiyu into the front passenger seat and put the seatbelt on her. When his finger unintentionally slid across her silky waist, he gulped, urged back any more "unintentional" moves, and closed the door.

He started the car and drove his Maybach to Xinxuan community.

The smell of alcohol began to rise in the car, Jiang Chen glanced at the completely passed out girl as he sighed and murmured.

"You know you are very attractive right now?"

Xia Shiyu ambiguously muttered something, but it was probably just her sleep talking.

Because he was afraid that she would get cold from the wind, Jiang Chen let the alcohol smell build up in the car and didn't open the window.

Finally bringing this girl to her front door, Jiang Chen couldn't care more as he used his free hand to search her body, before finding the key and opening the door.

He dragged Xia Shiyu, who was drunk like a pile of mud, into her place before he finally got a chance to breathe. But just as he was about to leave, he froze in place.

Her white neck was a soft shade of red, her slightly messy hair partially covered her gorgeous celebrity-like face, her bright red lips were parted, breathing a warm but intoxicating smell, her delicate eyebrows furrowed due to discomfort...

Seeing Xia Shiyu's letting her guard completely down, Jiang Chen gulped and took a subtle step forward.

If he did something now, she probably wouldn't know.

But just as the devil-like thought emerged in his mind, he refocused, scared by his own thought. He quickly took two deep breaths and forcefully shook his head.

Jiang Chen helped her take off her suit and then to make her more comfortable, he unbuttoned the first button on her button down shirt.

After doing all this, he put the sheet on her before sneaking out from the room.

He poured himself a cup of water in the kitchen, the cold sensation of water passing through his stomach calmed his heart.

After standing for a moment, he looked at the clock on the wall.

<10:32>

"It's already this late?" Jiang Chen yawned as the feeling of conflict rose.

Xinyuan community was in the complete opposite direction of Mingxing community. If he drove back now, it would be 12 before he arrived at home. Besides, he was already so tired that he really didn't want to drive an hour back.

Stay here for the night?

Jiang Chen gulped as it was an enticing thought.

[I did carry her back. It would be okay if I stayed without her permission for one night right?]

Thinking, Jiang Chen took out his phone and texted a message to Ayesha.

<I am busy tonight, I won't be back.>

...

Jiang Chen let out a long breath of air. He then stretched and scanned the two-story apartment.

There was a bedroom on the second floor, but probably never cleaned out since only Xia Shiyu lived here.

"Looks like I am sleeping on the sofa tonight... I'll take a shower first."

Jiang Chen muttered as he walked to the bathroom.

Within the mansion, Ayesha had her leg placed on the bar as she gently leaned her body forward, her chin slightly touching her knees. The elegant posture was not only difficult but also aesthetically pleasing to the eyes. Only such exercises could stretch

the tendons in the leg to increase the flexibility of the body. This was something genetic vaccine did not provide. Flexibility was one of the most common things that benefited her in all areas, such as fighting, such as doing other certain things...

But suddenly, the lightbulb went out.

Power outage?

Ayesha's movement stopped. With her body still pressed against her leg, she quietly listened.

She didn't rush to check the circuit as she smelled something odd.

Her cat-like pupils slightly narrowed in the darkness, giving off a dangerous vibe.

As if she had found her prey.

...

Since he couldn't break through the firewall, he could only capture the program developer and figure out the code the hard way.

Xin Lei's blood-shot eyes reflected the light on the screen. His lips rose slightly under his hoodie as he spoke in a screeching voice into

the Bluetooth headphone.

"The security system is hacked, your personal information is whitelisted."

For a hacker that is ranked third in China, and had been flagged on the front page of some unscrupulous organizations, this type of security was too easy for him.

Though he hasn't done these types of things without pay for a long time.

"Confirmed." A female voice came from under the hood of a purple tracksuit.

Yan Xiaoyan, the childhood honey of Xie Lei. She has a black belt in taekwondo, even though she is only 17. Her swift moves could easily beat 5-6 adults. Due to her affection towards Xie Lei, she agreed to this dangerous plan without much hesitation.

"It's taken care of, let's go." She waved at the two people behind her, and Yan Xiaoyan led the way to the high-end community.

Lu Dahu, known as the chubby tiger is a good friend of Xie Lie. He was three years older, spent a few years in the military, and is currently unemployed.

Zhang Chao, also Xie Lei's good friend. They met a long time ago on the internet. He was around the same age as Xie Lei. Although

he lacked knowledge about computers, he was a huge fan of the military. He was not tall but was skillful with almost all military gadgets.

After Xie Lei confessed his trouble, they agreed without hesitation.

The plan was simple: sneak into the mansion, control Jiang Chen, drive his car and take him out of the community to the agreed on spot.

They only had one and half hour. Once the clock hit 12, the server would reset, and the access control gained by Xie Lei would be lost.

His eyes locked onto the screen as Xie Lei already infiltrated the camera within the community. Seeing his three friends successfully pass identification at the front door and walk inside of the mansion, he took a deep breath and pressed a few more button.

The memory of the camera connected to the server was erased, the write function disabled. The camera tonight would not record anything. Once they left, they only needed to delete their personal information from the server.

As if they were never there.

Xie Lei knew that he and his friends were playing with fire. If they were accidentally caught, all of them would go to jail.

"People here are all veteran soldiers," Lu Dahu lowered his hat as he mumbled.

"Aren't you a veteran as well?" Zhao Chan with a backpack mocked.

"It's different." Lu Dahu forced a smile, as his square looking face looked rather helpless. "Based on the vibe I'm getting, they were at least special forces from the army."

"Be quiet." Yan Xiaoyan, half a step in front of them, whispered.

Xie Lin's fingers typed on the keyboard. He constantly changed between cameras while drawing with his right hand and marking the route of the patrol team.

"Turn right in the front, avoid patrol team A, walk straight into the intersection before turning left. Try to avoid contact with anyone, your guys look odd."

"Understood." Yan Xiaoyan lowered her voice as she held onto the Bluetooth earphone. She then signaled the two people behind her to quickly move to the street on the right.

Although they already passed the check at the front door, wandering around this late would easily cause suspension. They were not prepared to be questioned because the backpack Zhang Chao carried had all the tools for crime.

Three sticks, handcuffs, ropes, three night vision goggles, and one signal jammer.

Zhang Chao bought everything from an exclusive channel. They were all authentic product from American ATN corporation which shocked Lu Dahu, the veteran soldier. Of course, Xie Lie paid for it.

The three of them sneaked into the mansion at the deepest part of the community.

The European style high wall, the cut green grass, and the straight brick trail. The building's structure shone with elegance.

"Dammit, people here must be ridiculously wealthy. Do you think there are bodyguards inside?" Zhang Chao mustered as he took off his backpack.

"If there are any, I'll take care of it." The girl in the purple suit said confidently. She pressed the earphone again. "We are in position."

"Ok." Xie Lei took a deep breath and clicked his tongue.

Sparks suddenly came out of the generator on the north side. In an instant, the entire community fell into darkness.

With fingers on the keyboard, he simultaneously locked the electrical room's password so that even if they started the backup generator, it would take awhile.

He had to thank the highly digitalized design of the community. If it were a mechanical lock, there would be nothing that he could do.

Without wasting a second, Yan Xiaoyan took out a card from her pocket and swiped it on the metal gate. Xie Lei who already acquired the password information from the database and had copied the key onto the black card. The card in her hand was equivalent to the actual key and easily opened the door.

"Quick! Put this on."

Zhang Chao excitedly threw the night vision goggles and sticks into their hands and put one on his hand skillfully as well.

The night vision goggle not only allowed them to obtain vision in the dark, but it also hid their faces.

They quickly sneaked into the mansion and approached the door.

Pressing against the door, Zhang Chao took out a lock pick and opened the door with a few clicks. Then he signaled the two companions to enter.

The mansion looked rather empty; there was no one on the first floor.

Based on the lights they saw from the outside, there should be people on the third floor.

The three quietly waited against the wall.

The electric valve was outside. If someone came down to check, they must pass by where they stood.

"Why is there no noise at all? Typically shouldn't they all check the valve?" Lu Dahu's eyebrows tightened as he said with his voice lowered.

Yan Xiaoyan also raised her eyebrows.

Not only were there no footsteps heard upstairs, but there was also no lights from a phone or candle.

Could it be that Jiang Chen was already asleep, and just forgot to turn off the lights.

"Let's go to the bedroom." Yan Xiaoyan suppressed her voice as she led the way, sneaking upstairs.

...

It would be up to them once they enter the mansion. The camera in the community could not monitor inside the mansion as it was for the consideration of residents' privacy.

The mansion was in a frightening darkness.

But the darker it was, the more advantageous it was for them since they had night vision goggles...

The camera in the community was installed with internal batteries so that even though the power went out, it could still last for a few more hours.

Seeing his friends have already entered the mansion, Xie Lei let out a sigh and leaned against the chair.

"Now just need to catch Jiang Chen, get the firewall security code from his mouth, hack into <New Era> server, and delete the user information and gate data clean... Pity, the game is not bad." He shook his head, stared at the open gate, and mustered arrogantly.

"Please close your eyes at night."

Chapter 164: Is there a need to have a reason?

Water poured down.

Jiang Chen closed the knob before he shook off the droplets of water on his head, he then walked out of the shower as he grabbed a towel beside him and wiped himself.

It felt much better after the shower as if the all the alcohol and weariness was washed away.

But the faint fragrance in the room put him in an awkward spot physiologically. He thought while he wiped his hair with the towel.

But as he wiped, his hand froze in the air.

[This is... Xia Shiyu's towel?]

Thinking that towel once covered a pure blossoming flower, and countlessly wiped the mists off of the leaves...

He stared at the towel in his hand as Jiang Chen's expression on his face suddenly turned awkward.

But at this time, a blurry, but shaky figure suddenly appeared on the opaque glass in the washroom. Jiang Chen, who realized what

happened, was about to stop her before the bathroom door was pushed open first.

Ka.

Seeing the haggard Xia Shiyu arduously holding on the door frame. Just as she was about to come in, she was stunned at the doorstep.

The cynical thing that appeared in her field of vision made her briefly lost her ability to think.

It was hard to describe the expression on her face, should it be wry? Shocked? Or humiliated.

The air of silence filled the air between the two.

"Hi." Jiang Chen first broke the silence rigidly. He moved the towel to cover the inexplicable part while keeping a straight face.

Perhaps maybe she was drunk, or perhaps the image was too shocking, Xia Shiyu didn't scream, but rather she calmed down and silently closed the door.

Looking at the closed the door, a bitter smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

"Uh... Maybe I should have screamed?"

Since he already used, and also was seen, might as well finish drying himself.

Jiang Chen shameless dried his entire body, then washed her towel before putting his clothes back on. He then left the bathroom.

He turned to the living room as Xia Shiyu was already sitting on the sofa. When Jiang Chen came out, her vision immediately gazed onto him.

Just as Jiang Chen was mentally prepared for the "pervert" "sick-minded," the expected anger didn't arrive.

"Uh, are you going to ask me something?" He felt a bit frightened by Xia Shiyu's silence, Jiang Chen careful sat across from her as he said apologetically.

Xia Shiyu still didn't say anything, with the aid of the moonlight, it was visible that on the usually cold face, the bright red lips were slightly trembling.

[Because she is so angry she couldn't express it?]

Jiang Chen drilled deep into his mind and still couldn't figure out the current mood of this girl. The prideful ice beauty realized after waking up that she was lying on the bed, with clothes slovenly, the first button of the dress shirt unbuttoned, and also a man (pervert)

using her washroom to take a shower, using the towel that she had always used...

From any perspective, she must not be in the best mood.

"Ummm, you were drunk." Jiang Chen awkwardly tried to explain.

With the direct stare, Jiang Chen didn't know if she was thinking or mooning out.

"You were sleeping on the table, so I carried you back on my back. Your car is still there, remember to drive it back tomorrow." Seeing Xia Shiyu did not react, Jiang Chen continued.

"Why?" Seemed like she reacted to this sentence, Xia Shiyu murmured as if she was whispering in her dream.

"Why? Is that even a question." Jiang Chen had a bitter smile, "I can't leave you there by yourself. You live alone, and you drank yourself like that, be more cautious next time. If a human trafficker is pretending to be someone to be close to you, you don't even know if you were sold to some desolate mountain areas."

Hearing this, Xia Shiyu looked over and made eye contact with Jiang Chen.

After a long silence, even to her disbelief, she asked, "Then would you come to save me?"

He was shocked by the sudden question, Jiang Chen thought for a glimpse.

"Yes."

"Why?" It was still the dreamy mutter.

Expectation? Or perhaps just confusion?

"Does there need to be a reason?" Jiang Chen sighed as he asked rhetorically.

Humans were never a pure logical animal, what's the point of excessive need for reasons?

Xia Shiyu was not pleased with Jiang Chen's response. The graceful top lip bit on the bottom one, the rather blank expression seemed like she still hasn't gained a clear mind.

Seeing that she hadn't said anything, Jiang Chen coughed and gently said.

"You are drunk. Don't drink this much in the future, now go get some rest."

Although he didn't know what she was so fixated about, based on this response, she was not angry?

She stood up wobbling, just as Jiang Chen let a sigh thinking she was going back to the room to sleep, she moved across and stood in front of him.

"You, who do you like?" The voice carried some intoxication, but the tone certainly carried CEO Xia's authority.

The random questions threw Jiang Chen off.

He forced a smile and didn't answer. He didn't know how to answer.

After the last press conference, he already had a sense for Xia Shiyu's feelings towards him.

Although she always put on a cold expression that kept people a thousand miles away, her heart was still that of a child.

As to why he said that, it was because only a child would believe coldness meant maturity.

If it were someone without boundary, it wouldn't whatever, but Xia Shiyu...

She definitely would not accept him being with other women. Or should we say any "normal" women would not. Jiang Chen asked himself. He certainly had feelings for her, but his feelings were just

beginning to develop. As to giving up something for her, he could not do it.

"I," Jiang Chen hesitantly opened his mouth, but the words were stuck in his throat.

"I don't want to hear it." She shook her head, as her slightly messy but luscious hair waved.

Suddenly, she made a move that completely left Jiang Chen dumbfounded.

A delicate hand reached out as two fingers audaciously squeezed his chin. Jiang Chen stared at the pair of crystal clear eyes. Her mouth opened slightly, and she moved in closer.

His conscience told him, she was drunk, you should wake her up.

But seeing the approaching, blushing, attractive face, he could not say a single word.

The devil-like thought spun in his head as Jiang Chen gulped.

[She is the one being proactive. If I pretend I don't know...]

But suddenly, an untimely ringtone disrupted this tranquil moment. Xia Shiyu's action stopped abruptly. The misty eyes regained a hint of clarity as she looked at Jiang Chen ever so close

to her.

"I, I'll take a phone call." Jiang Chen got up and escaped.

Xia Shiyu froze blankly there. Her face began to turn red. Even under the not so bright moonlight, it was apparent.

[What did I do?]

Fine droplets of sweat began to surface on her heated body. The alcohol evaporated with the sweat as she began to sober up.

Without thinking, she dashed into the bedroom without turning around.

Bam!

The door slamming sound transmitted behind him as Xia Shiyu fled into the bedroom.

Jiang Chen forced a smile as he looked at the phone.

It was Ayesha.

Jiang Chen put his hand against the wall as he picked up the phone.

"Hello?"

He sensed some strangeness to Ayesha calling him now.

...

With a stick in her hand, Yan Xiaoyan gently pushed open the door.

No one was there.

She shook her head at the teammate behind her, signaling Lu Dahu to walk to the adjacent bedroom.

Even if she carefully controlled her footsteps, the contact between her runners and the expensive wooden floor made a faint sound.

Because they didn't know which bedroom Jiang Chen slept in, they had to use the dumbest method, which was to search the rooms one by one.

Zhang Chao stayed on the first floor to prevent Jiang Chen from escaping. At the same time, he opened the signal jammer to prevent the target from calling the police.

In the spacious living room, Zhang Chao scanned his surroundings.

The bright green vision in the night vision goggles made the darkness not so frightening.

Seeing the home theatre on the wall, he was shocked.

"85 inches 4K smart TV, as well as the TV screen. This at least cost upwards of half a million," he mustered in his mind as he felt anxious.

It was his first time kidnapping, and they were just not kidnapping an ordinary person. They were kidnapping the wealthy and influential president of Future Technology.

He could only pray that Xiaoyan was clean with her moves and their faces won't be revealed to Jiang Chen. Or else, Jiang Chen had hundreds of ways to make sure they never live in Wanghai again.

Just as he was still debating in his mind, something forcefully struck the back of his neck.

Before he could react, he lost his conscious and fell to the ground.

On the other side...

Yan Xiaoyan was already on the third floor.

To increase efficiency, she and Lu Dahu decided to advance separately.

Just as she got to the gym, the room that previously had the lights on, she felt suddenly alerted. Without thinking, she immediately swept the stick behind her.

The sound of air breaking echoed as the hit obviously missed. Easily dodging the strike, Ayesha, with a grim look, moved.

When she thought the situation couldn't get any worse, Yan Xiaoyan immediately kicked up her leg and blocked the lightning-fast roundhouse kick.

"Ouch-!"

Sharp pain transmitted from her legs.

Cold sweat began to drop from Yan Xiaoyan's forehead as fear began to overwhelm her.

They were not on the same level. She was part of the national competition before, but even in the championship match, she never felt such powerful force.

Yan Xiaoyan quickly moved back, but she was already backed up against the window.

The pristine moonlight shed into the room as she felt her vision increase drastically.

She pulled off the annoying night vision goggles, only leaving the mask on her face. Yan Xiaoyan stared at the girl approaching her.

The girl was not tall; she could even be described as tiny. Her wavy hair was tied into a ponytail. She had an exotic, gorgeous face, but all these factors were not critical. What made Yan Xiaoyan frantic was the grim looking eyes. They were looking at her as if she was a dead body.

The desire to kill was immense!

Chapter 165: A Farce

Hearing noise coming from the gym, Lu Dahu quickly rushed over. When he saw Yan Xiaoyan confronting Ayesha, he held his breath and sneaked up behind her in an attempt to choke her from behind.

Yan Xiaoyan also held her breath when she saw Lu Dahu approach Ayesha from the back. Her heart was about to jump out. When she thought the plan was about to work, she saw a sneer from the corner of Ayesha's mouth.

She moved like a leopard.

The girl turned around and performed a roundhouse kick. The swift action directly landed on Lu Dahu's unguarded chest. The power, disproportionate to her size, kicked the almost two hundred pounds, well-built man, away.

Yan Xiaoyan looked at the scene in disbelief as the hand carrying the stick shook uncontrollably.

Although she held a weapon in hand, it did not bring her the slightest sense of safety.

However, she didn't back down.

Ayesha looked at her in silence. Then, grabbing the box-shaped signal jammer from her back, she turned off the power.

"Static-, Xiaoyan, how's the progress going." Seeing the communication channel was restored, Xie Lei desperately asked.

"Lei. I might-" Yan Xiaoyan said with bitterness in her voice.

But before she finished her sentence, the communication channel ceased again.

Ayesha restarted the signal jammer, tossed the device away, and opened the EP on her wrist.

The wireless tracker in her pocket already sent the communication information to the EP. It marked two related red dots on the EP map.

Utilizing the brief window when the communication channel was restored, she located the "commander's" coordinates.

The magic of future technology was something these "primitives" would never understand.

Yan Xiaoyan was shaking when she saw Ayesha's series of moves. She didn't know what she was doing. The calmness before had completely vanished. The confidence she built based on her fighting ability was quickly shattered by the clean moves of the girl in front of her.

But, for him...

Yan Xiaoyan's eyes were reignited with courage when she thought of Xie Lei. She gritted her teeth and dashed at Ayesha, kicking with lightning speed.

Since she was at a disadvantage in terms of defense, she must attack.

This kick was aimed directly at Ayesha's head.

But the girl remained calm. Unlike what Yan Xiaoyan had imagined, she easily dodged her kick. Then, with cat-like agility, Ayesha was behind her.

As Yan Xiaoyan had guessed, they were not on the same level.

Before she was able to react, a sharp pain came from the back of her neck, making her lose consciousness. She immediately fell to the ground.

...

"Someone attacked the mansion," Ayesha concisely reported.

Jiang Chen's expression changed immediately, "Are you okay?"

"I'm okay. The attackers had some creative ideas, but the techniques they used were that of an amateur's. Based on the skill levels of those people, they must have someone strong assisting them to avoid the patrol team. Based on initial speculation, that person should be a hacker proficient in cyber warfare," Ayesha said softly as she looked grimly at the three people lying in the basement with their hands and feet tied up.

Hearing Ayesha was safe, Jiang Chen was relieved. But then he quickly realized that his worry was a bit unwarranted.

After deliberating for a moment, Jiang Chen asked in an undertone, "Do you know who sent them there."

"Not clear yet. But I already have the coordinates of the hacker. I'll send it to you by phone."

"Mhmm, I'll take care of it." Jiang Chen hung up the phone.

Shortly after, Little White shook as a picture of the coordinates were sent to Jiang Chen's phone.

Two dots were connected. One dot was located in his mansion, while the other one was located in the rural area of Wanghai.

He looked in the direction of Xia Shiyu's bedroom and hesitated.

But in the end, he sighed. He decided not to go up and knock on the door. Instead, he put on his shoes and left the apartment.

...

With her back against the cold wooden door, Xia Shiyu hugged her knees as she buried her head in her arms. However, through her arms, the red hue on her gorgeous face could still be seen.

[Wooo, I want to die... What did I just do.]

A soft whimper escaped her mouth as her ostrich-like head buried deeper between her legs.

Her thoughts were a mess. The furious pounding in her left chest was too distracting.

[What if he knocks on the door?

Should I open it? But... I almost just did that kind of thing.

Ahhhhh! I want to die. This is so embarrassing.

But I should open the door. It would be rude just to leave him hanging in the living room. If I explained, it would get rid of the -]

Bang!

The sound of the door closing transmitted through from the

outside.

Xia Shiyu paused for a moment as she slowly lifted her head up.

Seemed to be the front door.

He left?

He just left?

While she let out a sigh of relief, for some reason, she felt disappointed.

But as to why she felt disappointed, she couldn't give a reason.

...

Driving furiously on the road, Jiang Chen glanced at the red dot on the GPS before he fixated his gaze back onto the road.

He let out a sigh as he held onto the wheel.

"It would be better to find a chance and talk to her," He mumbled. Jiang Chen turned the steering wheel before parking the car near the target's community.

Since it was a hacker proficient in cyber warfare, the

community's cameras should be under their control?

Definitely a possibility.

Jiang Chen locked the door and walked towards the back door of the community.

It was almost 12. Only a few windows in the community still had their lights on.

He avoided a few obvious cameras as he approached the electric substation of the target's building. He opened the box and put his right hand inside.

Charging the interdimensional bracelet.

The energy of the bracelet was suddenly full. The brute intake of electric current instantly exceeded the threshold value of the substation. Without a doubt, the entire building lost power.

A mocking smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face. He closed the box, put his hands in his pocket, and walked into the shadow.

It was 12 at night.

People who were still awake, and desperately wanting to restore the power rather than going to sleep, would probably be the only ones providing assistance.

Regardless who it was, he only needed for the fish to take the bait.

...

Xie Lei's eyes locked onto the screen as he nervously waited for his companion's response.

The communication signal was interrupted. Did they get caught? Can't be. If they did, they would use the phone to communicate with me, the perpetrator.

"Dammit!" Xie Lei's fist slammed onto the table.

He did not consider a backup plan. He never thought about the changing variables within the plan. He started to regret the tracksuits. Even if he was out of solutions, he never should have come up with kidnapping. The evidence Black Tiger controlled would at max get him ten years, but kidnapping...

His face turned pale as he prayed.

"Xiaoyan, Chubby Tiger, Xiaochao... Please be safe, please!"

But then, the entire building suddenly lost power. This made the already tense Xie Lei jump.

"The fuse short-circuited? Can't be a power outage. There was no notice posted," He mustered as Xie Lei left his seat.

In the assumption that someone was caught, the opposing force must have obtained my location through interrogation. Then, I should have been caught already. The door definitely won't be able to block anyone. However, since no one is here, that means they should not have been caught but entered into a stalemate with the target.

Without electricity, there was nothing he could do.

Regardless, he must quickly restore power. Once it passes 12, the server would reset. If he wanted to provide support, he must hack into the server again.

Xie Lei left the room.

Squeak-.

He carefully opened the door, cautiously looking into the pitch black hallway. When he didn't see anyone, Xie Lei let out an uneasy breath.

"Am I being too anxious..."

It made sense. If they already knew my location, what's the whole point of using the trick of cutting the power?

But what he didn't know was that in the near distant future, there would be a device that could locate communication signals. A device used by future snipers. Though of course, there will be signal jammers in the future, but right now... it was as easy as breathing for Ayesha to location the coordinates of the communicator.

The night's breeze was quite chilly.

The pale hand of the teen tightened the zipper of his tracksuit. His entire face was hidden under the shadow of the hoodie.

It was already autumn. Maybe it was time to buy Xie Lin some thicker clothes?

When he thought about his sister, a gentle smile appeared on his face.

Although the first reaction of most people was gloom when they first see him, she was the only one that didn't think so.

Just like an angel.

[Yes, that's right, I will protect my sister!]

He screamed in his mind as the sudden adrenaline pushed away some of his fear. He went downstairs and headed straight to the

electric substation that he was so familiar with.

He opened the box but was stunned.

Not right.

He knew what a short fuse looked like, but he didn't see the entire meter being burnt out.

"You are the perpetrator behind the scenes," a sluggish voice said from behind him.

Xie Lei turned his head and saw a young man standing there with his hands in his pocket. He was observing him with interest in his eyes.

"Your left foot moved half a step back. I guess you want to run, but I suggest you don't do that." Jiang Chen sighed.

Seeing his thoughts exposed, Xie Lei became calm as he locked his eyes right onto Jiang Chen.

"Xiaoyan... you caught all my friends?"

"You can say that. My bodyguard's comment about you guys was, it was well thought out, but clumsily executed." Jiang Chen laughed before continuing, "First time doing this?"

"..." Xie Lei didn't answer. His mind spun furiously as he desperately tried to think of a way to escape.

"What was the intention of entering my mansion? If you don't answer, I will just default it to murder. Trust me, I have enough money to convince the judges."

"Kidnap. To obtain the key to the server," Xie Lei squeezed out a few words in vain.

Threatening worked.

His face was extremely pale. It looked like that of someone who hadn't been outside for a long time. Around 1.60m tall, he had a slim built and looked like a teen. Jiang Chen couldn't comprehend why this teen he has never met before wanted to kidnap him.

"For money? Or for other reasons? I don't want to use the truth-telling liquid on teens, it will have an uncontrollable effect on the developing brain," Jiang Chen mocked, but his tone held a hint of truth.

"You are Jiang Chen?" Xie Lei abruptly asked.

Jiang Chen shrugged. "Did you just realize? I recommend you answer my question before I use force."

Xie Lei let out a sigh as he confessed, 'Black Tiger made me do this.'

Jiang Chen's eyebrows raised as he didn't immediately believe his words.

"Who is Black Tiger?"

Xie Lei laughed in agony. "I don't know. If I knew, I would not be manipulated by him."

Chapter 166: I can give you a chance

"For your friends' safety, I have no choice but to invite you to take a walk with me." It was useless to object as Jiang Chen said this with an unrefusable tone.

Xie Lei's eyes strained for a moment before his shoulders finally loosened.

"I can go with you, could you give me 10 minutes?"

.

"That depends on what you are going to do with this 10 minutes."

He took a deep breath as Xie Lei said, "Don't worry, just leaving a note."

He thought for a moment, as Jiang Chen didn't refuse his request, he got a go-ahead gesture.

Seeing Jiang Chen agreed, the teen was relieved and turned around to go upstairs.

Jiang Chen's hands were in his pocket when he followed the teen up, holding onto a pistol. But the teen didn't play any tricks with him. He took out the key, opened the old looking door, and walked inside into the room closest to the door.

Xie Lei took out the phone and turned on the flashlight which lit up the small room immediately.

Four desktops, two screens, wires tangled together and connected to unknown electronic equipment.

"Your work?" Jiang Chen was slightly shocked.

"Mhmm." Xie Lei didn't seem to want to say anything else about the question as he answered concisely.

He saw that the teen searched on the table for a while before picking up an MP3. It was uncommon to see such an out-of-date device.

He seemed to have opened the voice recording function as he put the MP3 close to his mouth and said.

"Linlin, I am sorry. Brother has to go somewhere really far. Although it is a bit shameless to say this... please forgive your irresponsible brother, I..."

"Are you saying your will?" Jiang Chen laughed.

Xie Lei ignored Jiang Chen as he took a deep breath and continued to say a few more things, such as "take care of yourself" and "the bank password is."

"Done?" Jiang Chen asked.

Although Jiang Chen felt sympathetic, he didn't plan on letting him off.

Since he already committed to the act, he must have been mentally prepared for the plan to fail.

Xie Lei nodded as he looked seriously at Jiang Chen, "I'm done. My sister is blind, I hope you don't hurt her."

"Don't worry, I don't hurt the innocent."

Without saying anything else, Xie Lei obediently followed Jiang Chen to the car and then to the mansion.

...

The power outage in the community caused quite a commotion. Especially since they found out it was caused by human intervention.

After the security confirmed the safety of every resident, they were surprised to find out there was no thief.

Regardless, it was a good thing that nothing was lost. Since people who lived here were either influential or wealthy. If

something did happen, then Wanhua Real Estate's reputation would suffer major damages.

Therefore, after confirming each household, they categorized this power outage as an accident and did not inform the police.

The power was restored.

At the same time, in the basement of the mansion.

Ayesha crossed her arms in front of her chest as she looked expressionlessly at the three people with their hands tied behind their backs. Looking at her cold gaze, Yan Xiaoyan felt her body shake uncontrollably. She had never been so frightened before. The fighting ability she had been so proud of, could not last two moves in front of this girl.

At the time, footsteps came from upstairs.

The iciness in Ayesha's eyes suddenly melted.

Yan Xiaoyan gulped as she looked with disbelief at the eyes that turned gentle instantly.

"You are back." Ayesha stood up.

"Mhmm." Jiang Chen rubbed her head, and then looked at the three people in the basement.

"Lei, how did you-" Yan Xiaoyan couldn't control her voice. No one revealed his location. How did he get caught?

"I got caught." Xie Lei revealed a bitter smile as he conscientiously extended both of his hands to Jiang Chen. "Tie me up."

Jiang Chen glanced at him as he signaled Ayesha to put handcuffs on him. Then he looked at all four of them. "Good. Since all the rats are caught, let's solve this problem once and for all."

Then, Jiang Chen took out the truth-telling liquid from his pocket, passed it to Ayesha, and stared at Xie Lei.

"I ask, you answer. If I feel you are lying, then I'll use the truth-telling liquid."

The interrogation began. Xie Lei, without resistance, confessed to everything Jiang Chen asked.

First, it was the identities of the four.

Veteran, unemployed military fanatic, female sports university student, and Xie Lei, the high school dropout hacker.

Xie Lei was quite impressive in his ability. Known as Green Bird, he placed third place within the Chinese Hacker Alliance. The

most impressive achievement was hacking into an unscrupulous organization's server for two years consecutively and raising the flag on its homepage.

Usually, he lived off of commission by completing missions for hire.

Because of one mistake, a hacker called Black Tiger obtained his identity which directly ended his brief career. Then he became the money making tool of Black Tiger. The missions he accepted began to leave the boundary of the law.

He was not afraid of going to jail, but what worried him most was his blind sister.

If Black Tiger revealed his information, he would definitely be in there for quite a long time. He could not imagine, without him, how his sister would survive.

After feeling conflicted for a long time, he decided to take this risk along with his three good friends. He decided to plan and execute a kidnap.

Unfortunately, it failed.

"You guys are great friends. He asked you guys to kidnap, and you guys agree? Would you guys murder people if he asked you to?" Jiang Chen looked mischievously at the three as he laughed.

Zhao Chang retracted his neck, frightened by Jiang Chen's look, but Lu Dahu seemed clam.

Then, Jiang Chen looked at the university student named Yan Xiaoyan.

"You? Seeing that your boyfriend is in trouble, you could risk going to jail for him?"

Yan Xiaoyan blushed. Just as she was about to argue they were only childhood sweetheart, Xie Lei interrupted.

"I already told you everything I needed to tell you. I am willing to take full responsibility as long as you let my friends go." After he finished, Xie Lei slowly lowered his head and kneeled on the ground.

Everyone held their breath.

Hearing that, Yan Xiaoyan wanted to defend for him, but she quickly realized that she had no excuse to do so.

Including herself, they were all criminals.

Jiang Chen expressionlessly overlooked Xie Lei.

"Do you think you have the right to discuss terms with me?"

"No." Xie Lei lowered his head.

After a brief silence, Jiang Chen suddenly began laughing.

"Although this comical gong show did not cause me any material losses, that doesn't mean I am openminded enough to let you go consequence free. But considering you were under the threat of someone else, I can give you a chance."

"I am willing to accept as long as you let my friends go."

"Lei..." Yan Xiaoyan looked at Xie Lei with tears in her eyes.

"Oh? Are you not going to ask what it is before accepting?"

"I will accept anything... This is my own fault. I don't want to trouble my friends anymore," Xie Lei took a deep breathe as he said calmly.

Hearing that, Jiang Chen nodded, looking rather pleased.

"Since you have agreed, then your request is easy. After everything is done, your friends can leave."

Jiang Chen paused as he asked lightheartedly.

"How do you usually communicate with Black Tiger. By phone?"

Chapter 167: Following the vine

Black Tiger; real name, Zhang Hao. A premium member of the Han Hacker Alliance but his skill was rather ordinary. However, by coincidence, he managed to enter the personal computer of the renowned Green Bird and collected some critical evidence.

When Xie Lei found out, it was too late. Zhang Hao already saved the information and pulled the cord.

It was the most shameless way, but that was the most effective way. Regardless of how insane one's computer skill was, there was nothing one can do if the other person doesn't connect to the web.

After that, he had reached the "peak of his life." He controlled the personal information of the third-ranked hacker in the Han Hacker Alliance. He used this to blackmail him into completing challenging missions and then collecting the lucrative commission for himself.

Not long ago he received a deal.

5 million RMB commission. The mission was to hack into <New Era>'s server, delete all user information, and delete the game data inside the game's server.

5 million! It was enough to live half of his life in comfort.

Black Tiger's eyes immediately turned red as he accepted the

mission without hesitation, and then flung it to the hands of Xie Lei and threatened him to complete it. As to if Xie Lei had the ability to finish this mission, Black Tiger never questioned it for a single second.

In his eyes, if he could hack into the server of an organization with a notorious reputation, there was no way he couldn't take care of a server of a private enterprise.

But unfortunately, Xie Lei was completely out of sorts.

When he was forced into the corner, Xie Lei had to take the riskiest route.

And because of this, Xie Lei managed to get himself into serious trouble.

In the morning, what woke Black Tiger from his sweet dream was his ringtone.

He drowsily picked up the phone.

"Hello?"

Dooooo-.

The phone hung up?

Black Tiger was lost for a moment as he looked confusingly at the phone. However, he didn't bother finding out who it was as he fell asleep again.

What he didn't know was, the second he picked up the phone, his coordinates were marked on a map.

...

The person named Black Tiger was also in Wanghai City. This saved Jiang Chen quite a bit of trouble.

He drove the car onto the highway as he looked at the dot on the GPS. A mocking smile appeared on his face. Ayesha was sitting in the front passenger seat, her long eyelashes swept together and eyes closed as she rested.

Xie Lei sat in the back seat. The teen took off his hood and revealed a sickly pale face with anxiousness written all over it. As well, on his neck, he wore an electronic collar.

"Now that you are on your way to see your enemy, how do you feel?" Jiang Chen casually asked.

"...If possible, I want to punch him," Xie Lei mustered in a small voice.

"Haha, you'll have the chance." Jiang Chen smiled.

Yan Xiaoyan and the gang were still locked in the mansion's basement. Before the whole event is resolved, they weren't allowed to leave.

As to Xie Lei, he already reached an agreement with Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen won't go after his friends, and in exchange, he'll work for Jiang Chen for the next ten years.

Jiang Chen needed a talent capable of cyber warfare. Although Yao Yao's computer skill was impeccable, he couldn't bring it over to the modern world.

Three days later, Xie Lei will be flying to Niger. There, someone will pick him up. To maximize his ability, he'll receive military training for half a year, and learn more advanced computer knowledge.

The source of the advanced computer knowledge naturally came from the digital library in the apocalypse. As to how advanced, around ten years more advanced than the modern world. Although Jiang Chen was clueless, Yao Yao would organize the information for him.

As to his sister Xie Lin, Jiang Chen will pay to send her to Frankberg to receive the most advanced eye treatment.

"Speaking of this, I think you are quite similar to the typical

protagonist in a novel," Jiang Chen glanced at Xie Lei in the mirror as he joked.

"Mhmm?" Xie Lei looked confusedly at Jiang Chen.

"Both parents are busy. You have a sister and an apartment."

"...Both of my parents are not busy. They passed away a long time ago. This joke is not funny." A gloom fell over the teen's face.

"Ahem, sorry. Let's try another one? Let me think... King of special forces, possess a unique ability, returned to city after ten years-"

"I think you are more similar to a protagonist," Xie Lei abruptly interrupted Jiang Chen.

"Do I?" Jiang Chen subconsciously asked rhetorically but was astonished.

Eh? Pretty f*cking similar.

The target was not too far from the Mingxing Area. Another hour drive before the three arrived at their destination.

The six-story high apartments lined up in rows. The dull and unruly grass looked like it hasn't been taken care of for a long time. From any angle, the community was average.

Because they went during work hours, there was not a lot of people in the community. Therefore, there was no one standing on the balcony looking curiously at the three people.

However, they only knew Black Tiger's coordinates; they could not precisely locate his room.

But Jiang Chen had other ways to determine the precise location.

He stood under the apartment as he signaled Ayesha, who already went upstairs, and called Black Tiger's number again.

"Hello?" A male voice yawning transmitted from the other side of the phone.

Ayesha held the signal jammer as she gradually moved up floor by floor.

"Hello. Do you make fake IDs? Can I get 10? Are you trustworthy?" Jiang Chen threw a bunch of questions in his face.

"What?" Black Tiger was dumbfounded as he held the phone completely clueless.

"I thought you made fake IDs! Your number is written on the wall. And that's why I called..." Jiang Chen used a serious tone as he continued to make up elaborate lies. Xie Lei, standing beside

him, raised his eyebrows as he could not bear to watch any more of this.

"You are f*cking ret*rded-"

The voice ceased. Though, at the same time, Ayesha was holding the signal jammer, standing in front of Apt 402.

Jiang Chen hung up the phone, waved at Xie Lei, and went upstairs.

"Go knock." Jiang Chen patted Xie Lei's shoulder.

Xie Lei hesitated for a moment before walking up and knocking on the door.

"Who is it?" Following the voice, footsteps could be heard gradually approaching. Then, the door quickly popped open.

A man in his 30s peaked his messy-haired head out. The unshaven face looked sloppy, the sleepy eyes indicated that he had yet to wake up, and his right hand was holding onto a phone.

When he saw Xie Lei's face, his expression instantly changed.

"Looks like it is him." Jiang Chen shrugged.

He didn't expect someone with a pseudo name as cool as Black Tiger to be someone this wretched.

Black Tiger immediately tried to slam the door shut. But, one of Xie Lei's foot was already wedged inside, and he simultaneously lifted his right hand to prevent the door from closing.

His fist then forcefully smashed into Black Tiger's nose, making him fall backward with a "Bam" as he hit the shoe rack.

"You, what are you doing? Wait, how did you find me here?" Black Tiger looked in horror at the enraged teen sitting on top of him.

"F*ck you!" Blowing the anger off of his chest, Xie Lei threw another punch right at the disgusting face.

Black Tiger desperately tried to fend him off, but Xie Lei already acquired the "geographical advantage". His punches, from up to down, made it impossible for Black Tiger to fight back as his face had to take every single punch.

Xie Lei breathed heavily as he gritted his teeth and raised his hand once again.

But this time, Jiang Chen held onto it.

"Enough. If you keep hitting him, he will die."

Hearing that, Xie Lei stared at the faintly breathing Black Tiger as he finally stopped.

Jiang Chen looked speechlessly at the bruised up Black Tiger as he let out a troubled sigh.

"Whatever. It's hard to interrogate you now in this condition. Just put on some medicine."

Black Tiger didn't see Jiang Chen's face which saved him a lot of trouble. Although truth-telling liquid would make him lose part of his memory, Jiang Chen didn't want to risk it.

Ayesha, who came in last, closed the door. She helped Jiang Chen drag Black Tiger into the living room, tied him to the chair and took out the truth-telling liquid.

In around a minute's time, the man in his 30s rolled his eyes and stared blankly at the wall in front of him. It looked like the drug was effective.

Seeing the look on Black Tiger's face, Xie Lei gulped. He thought about how the drug was almost used on him as he felt a shivering chill down his spine.

"Name?"

"Zhang Hao." A zombie-like response.

"Age?"

"32."

"32."

"Who sent you the mission?"

"I don't know. I registered on an intermediary website. After accepting the mission, the details were sent to my email."

"What's your email and password?"

Black Tiger, without resistance, recited out his email and password.

Then, Jiang Chen ignored Black Tiger as he turned to look at Xie Lei with a smile.

"Your first mission is here. Now that you have the email and password, as well as the device that accepted the mission, I want you to find out who the client was."

Xie Lei shook his head with a troubled smile.

"That's impossible. Since contact with the client was made through the intermediary website, then the email must be sent on behalf of the website."

"Then you should hack into the server of the middleman, through the backend, and dig the client out."

Xie Lei was shocked. Though looking at the stern expression on Jiang Chen's face, he took a deep breath.

"This is crazy! Hacking into the server of the intermediary website for hackers... Let me try."

"Be bold. There is someone here that's the scapegoat." Jiang Chen glanced at Black Tiger on the chair and laughed delightfully.

When Xie Lei passed Black Tiger, he stopped and asked him.

"Where is the evidence used to threaten Green Bird?"

"On the computer, and on the USB drive that is on the second level of the bookshelf..."

When he got the answer he needed, Xie Lei walked quickly into Black Tiger's room and managed to find the USB.

He slammed the USB on the ground and smashed the nightmare that had threatened him for so long into pieces.

He then found Black Tiger's personal computer. Although the unfamiliar device did not feel smooth, it was not a big deal for a hacker his level.

He opened the computer and began to furiously type on the keyboard.

...

<You haven't played with me for so long, are you just leaving me here?>

Jiang Chen imagined her bitter expression and smiled, as his fingers began to type on the screen.

<Miss me?>

Buzz-, the response speed of this girl was still shocking.

<I have been busy. I made a trip overseas...>

<*Rub head* Busy. Do you need me to reward you? ^_^>

Seeing the cute emoji, the tip of Jiang Chen's mouth curved up.

Adorable, can warm the bed, understanding, knows her limits.

Although not the best girl to marry, a perfect mistress nonetheless. After coming back from Wanghai University, Jiang Chen paid for her breach of contract so she could gain her "freedom," and also become unemployed.

Although he did become her sugar daddy, he still never delivered the movie promise...

<I'll be on a vacation at Pannu Islands soon, do you want to come?>

<I do~~>

Jiang Chen felt exasperated. Though, just as he was about to reply, Xie Lei came out of the room.

"I found it. This is the phone number and email of the client, based on all signs... The client is Lingyu Technology."

Lingyu Technology?

A sneer appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

"Excellent. Time to take care of this problem."

Chapter 168: The Malignant event and Aftermath

October 16, 2015.

It was not an ordinary day for Lingyu Technology.

"What is going on? Tell me what is going on!" Ling Zhongtian clung on to Qian Haiming's collar as he roared out with bloodshot eyes.

Qian Haiming's mouth twitched, but he couldn't say a word.

"Boss, please, please calm down. Our programmers are fixing the server. I have also called the police, the deputy assured me that he would quickly..."

"Quickly my *ss!"

Ling Zhongtian pushed Qian Haiming away as he breathed heavily. He used one hand to hold onto the table, while the other trembling hand pulled out a drawer and he grabbed his cardiac medication.

His shaking fingers took several tries before twisting open the cap.

Finally pouring a few capsules into his hand, Ling Zhongtian

stuffed the medication in his mouth and chugged down some water with it.

He closed his eyes to regather his breath before finally opening them again. His emotions seemed to have calmed down.

Seeing that the boss was no longer angry, Qian Haiming who stood on the side afraid to talk, finally let out a breath of air.

But when he raised his head, he was shocked to find that the respectable boss was no longer there.

The person who replaced him was a pale looking old man that lost his ability to speak.

...

Morning.

Players from I am ATM, Dota history logged onto the game as per their usual routine to finish their daily quest. But when they logged in, they were enraged to find out that their account returned to level 0? The diamond they obtained from gold, equipment, and real money...

Were all f*cking gone?

There was only a brief explanation posted on the official site

regarding this incident.

<Last night at around midnight, the server received a malicious attack from hackers. Programmers are currently working to restore lost user data and upgrading system security. For the inconvenience it may cause the users, Lingyu Technology express their deepest regret...>

Deep regret my *ss!

The enraged players almost blew up Lingyu Technology's customer service. The customer service representatives would receive another call immediately after hanging up.

However, there was nothing they can do to resolve the complaints of the players since they were not responsible for the operation. They could only follow the procedure of explaining the current situation to the players and asking them to remain calm. As well as assure them that the programmers were currently working to resolve the problem, and for them to please be patient...

But it was futile. For the millions of angry players, the one hundred customer service representative team was a drop of water in the vast ocean.

When the angry players saw that the problem was not resolved and that the helpline was constantly busy, they directly dialed 315 to file a violation of rights against Lingyu Technology.

They have purchased the diamonds, spent their time leveling up, and now it was all gone?

However, these complaints were meaningless against Lingyu Technology as at the time of registration, there was a clause added at the bottom to offset such incidents. The final interpretation of this agreement was up to the discretion of the Operator. Also, Chinese laws were ambiguous when it came to intellectual property protection, rarely would there be a case where players have won a lawsuit against a game operator.

But the negative reputation caused by the lost user data was hard to erase. Official forums had an influx of complaining players. The moderators had to increase the requirement for posting and began muting and banning people. Not only did this not control the status quo, but the players without a place to express their rage also began to flood into other forums.

Major BBS (1) forums were all pulled into the midst of this event, as the few justice seeking posts were instantly upvoted to the top.

Every post under the influence of the internet army unified their statement, and in the name of holiness, began a crusade on the evil operator.

Protecting their rights!

Everyone selectively chose to forget that Lingyu Technology was also a victim; the real person that made them suffer losses was the hacker that attacked the server.

As to how it escalated to this point, the internet army had their fair share of contribution. Once they swayed the opinion during the first outburst of anger, there was not much suspense in the remaining battle.

Lingyu Technology not only lost in skill but also public opinion.

The players part of the internet crusade realized that the operator did not compensate for their loss. The promised "1000 crystals for every player" could not compensate the loss of the players that paid for 2000.

The project department's "lack of action" and the customer service's perfunctory were interpreted as arrogance.

In the midst of disappointment and anger among the players, seeing that their votes by hands were useless, they began to vote with their feet.

The crusade ended, because they had already given up on the game. Instead, they chose a better mobile game.

There were better games on the market. The only reason they stood their ground on an almost out of date game was because of the emotional attachment, as well as the time and money sunk into it. But emotional attachment was certainly a fragile thing as the attitude and response of the operator indeed broke the heart of the players that stood their ground.

Seeing the account that they spent countless hours on being erased was more painful than seeing the game being shut down completely.

Based on market analysis, the server operated by Lingyu Technology lost 89% of their users due to this data postage. While the servers operated by other companies did not receive a malicious attack, the after effect of the event resulted in a significant amount of users being lost.

As if in one night, the Lingyu Technology that forged miracles collapsed.

At the same time, the new Future Technology was using its era-defining - <New Era> to rise to dominance.

The stars seemed to have aligned.

New Era was foretelling the end of the old era.

...

Within the international airport at Wanghai.

"Come back early..." Yan Xiaoyan's eyes were brimming with tears. She gently bit her lip as she gazed into the teen's eyes.

"Mhmm. I will." Xie Lei felt his face burn from her stare.

Zhang Chao hooked onto his neck with a smirk, "Nice buddy. When did you get together with Xiaoyan. She is so violent-"

A deathly stare shot over as Zhang Chao backed away, causing a forced a laugh.

"Sorry...."

Xie Lin frightenedly stood behind Xie Lei and held onto her brother's hand.

It was her first time being on a plane. Though she has also never seen plane before.

Xie Lei seemed to have sensed his sister's anxiousness as he gently squeezed her hand. The pale face that lacked sunlight displayed an unfitting tenderness.

With her head lowered and face blushing, Xie Lin had a lot of things to tell her brother, but she could only faintly squeeze out one word.

"Mhmm."

Xie Lei had a relieved smile as he rubbed his sister's head.

He didn't know when Lu Dahu walked up to him put felt him pat his shoulder.

"Take care."

"Mhmm." Xie Lei nodded firmly.

Jiang Chen looked at the group of four from afar as he exclaimed arrogantly, acting on his seniority, "It's good to be young."

Ayesha who stood beside him tilted her head. Her cold face displayed a confused expression.

The goodbye was over.

Xie Lei took his sister's hand, took a deep breath, and walked in Jiang Chen's direction.

"Ready?" Jiang Chen smiled amiably.

Although this teen did orchestrate a plan against him, surprisingly he did not hold any grudges.

Perhaps because he didn't suffer any material damage? Or perhaps because he thought this person wasn't inherently bad. Regardless, the actual people that should be punished was already punished.

"Mhmm." Xie Lei nodded and then bowed while looking at him genuinely. "Thank you."

"No problem. You can think of it as an exchange." Jiang Chen pointed at the electronic collar around his neck.

Although it was an electronic collar, it was not thick. It was only a thin layer of silica gel, which didn't make it uncomfortable to wear. It would also easily pass through security screening, a convenient tool.

Xie Lin looked curiously in her brother's direction and then in Jiang Chen's direction. Then, the adorable young face displayed a tender smile. She cutely bowed too as she said in a still childish voice.

"Thank you~"

Jiang Chen noticed that the color of her pupils was faint, as if it was covered by a thick layer of film.

Even though she couldn't see, she could blossom a smile this powerful?

"No problem," Jiang Chen kneeled down and said with a smile.

Jiang Chen noticed Xie Lei staring right at him. He paused for a second before he began to laugh.

"Are you really a Meiko (Japanese culture, someone who likes their own sister)." He stood up, patted the slim shoulder of the teen and said with a smirk.

The teen didn't answer, but rather looked away with a flushed face.

Xie Lin tilted her head as she confusedly pulled on Xie Lei's hand. She was still not at the age where she understood the meaning of Meiko.

"Haha, be assured. Train while you are there. Get more tanned, and you will look more lively." Jiang Chen used force when he patted the teen's back. "When you get to Niger, there will be someone waiting for you at the airport. You can call him Uncle Ivan, he'll be responsible for training you like a man."

"What do you mean like-"

Jiang Chen ignored Xie Lei's protest as he interrupted him, "You and your sister will stay for a day in Niger, then your sister will head to Charlotte Hospital in Frankberg under the supervision of advanced caregivers. That's enough. Stop standing around and go, now."

"... Thank you."

"Don't waste time, go board now."

...

Seeing the departing silhouette of the brother and sister, Jiang Chen's eyes narrowed, and the corner of his mouth curled up.

"What Ayesha, do you have any questions?" Jiang Chen noticed her rubbing her hair and the confusion in her eyes.

Face slightly red, Ayesha asked hesitantly, "They are your enemy. Why did you let them go, and on top of that help them..."

"Not every enemy is a real enemy." Eyes narrowed, Jiang Chen watched the brother and sister board and left Ayesha a confusing answer.

Ayesha tilted her head, she didn't quite understand the meaning behind it.

Jiang Chen took out his phone and called Xia Shiyu.

"Get the legal documents prepared. We are going to change our headquarters." When he said that, a bright smile appeared on his face.

For the real enemy, he will show no mercy.

(1) Bulletin Board System, similar to a forum.

(2) Vote with their feet, if they can't bring change, they can choose to leave.

Chapter 169: You should thank me

The earthquake has yet to settle 15 days after the Lingyu Technology data hostage incident that shocked the country's mobile game industry,

The perpetrator's intention was extreme malicious and didn't leave any ground for recovery.

Despite how hard the Lingyu Technology programmer tried, he couldn't manage to recover the lost user information. Based on industry experts' estimations, Lingyu Technology's direct loss was as high as 1.4 billion RMB, the magnitude of the indirect damage was even harder to quantify given the scale.

Regardless, the well-praised brand built through time has been tarnished. Even if Lingyu Technology tried to separate gamer operation from its business focus and shift to primarily game development, it would still be futile.

No matter how good the game was, players refused to buy into it for no reasons other than the fact that the game came from Lingyu Technology. Without players, no operator would dare to carry the game.

The game data was lost out of nowhere. Even if Lingyu Technology was a victim, why were their servers the only ones down while the others were fine? Couldn't they spend more money increasing the security of the servers?

All in all, once the reputation had spread out, it was impossible to erase. Even the long-term partner of Lingyu Technology 361 Corporation, maintained a cautious attitude with the newly developed game.

This malicious internet crime not only shook the industry, the ripple even spread to other aspects.

The angry players clearly escalated the incident, once the industry news became a society topic, bureaus had to respond to the situation.

Internet security was once again put on the table.

<Renren News> published a headline that condemned the usage of criminal attack using hacking technology. It also indicated that the bureaus are currently in discussion for improving the law...

At the same time, the investigation is currently ongoing. A team of internet security experts was quickly formed.

The attackers' IP was quickly locked. Even after layers of masking, it still didn't escape the tracking of experts. Regardless of how skillful the hackers are, as long as they are here, they must leave some sort of clue.

Zhang Hao, the Black Tiger, was quickly arrested. Although he cluelessly indicated that he was not involved, he still couldn't prove his innocence.

The computer conducting the crime was found in his room.

The frightened Zhang Hao frantically confessed the deal with Ling Zhongtian and Xie Lei. He insisted that he was framed and that it must have been Xie Lei. He was the third-ranked "Green Bird" on the hacker alliance. Only he had the ability to hack into Lingyu Technology's servers.

But it was useless, he couldn't provide evidence.

When he found out that the USB on his shelf disappeared, and the evidence stored in his computer vanished, Zhang Chao was completely dumbfounded.

Because Xie Lei already left the country with the reason of taking his sister to Germany for medical treatments, there was not enough evidence to prove his intent despite the suspicious source of funding. Xie Lei's personal account did not change, only a securitized foreign account paid for the plane tickets and the medical expense. Although the action was mysterious in nature, mysteriousness could not be used as evidence.

After spending a long time gathering evidence, the investigating team couldn't find any connection between the event and Xie Lei. However, they did find something interesting.

A few days ago, there was an illegal deal between Zhang Hao and Ling Zhongtian. A deal to attack Future Technology's servers...

However, the mission was canceled from Zhang Hao's side, the reason being the commission was too low. Of course, he had no recollection of this. The explanation behind this is simple - because Xie Lei used his computer, logged on his account, and canceled the quest.

The case was closed.

The perpetrator, Zhang Hao, terminated the contract because of the commission conflict with Lingyu Technology's president, Ling Zhongtian. Therefore, he infiltrated Lingyu Technology's server, and permanently deleted the user data which caused an insurmountable amount of economic loss to Lingyu Technology. Based on the extreme negative influence caused by society and the high value associated with the case, the supreme court's verdict was a life sentence.

Zhang Hao appealed, but the supreme court directly rejected the plead for appeal and maintained the verdict.

As for Ling Zhongtian, although he conducted illegal activity, it was merely an unsuccessful attempt, and thus it was hard to define the nature of the crime. He was not sentenced under the law for this reason.

But it was yet to be over. Ling Zhongtian's hiring of a hacker to attack Future Technology was quickly exposed online by "conscientious people" and Ling Zhongtian's identity instantly changed from the victim to the villain.

Those who previously felt sympathy for him immediately turned against him and joined the new round of internet crusade against Lingyu Technology.

Of course, a small amount of voices suggested that it could be the conspiracy of Future Technology. After all, the collapse of the long-time industry leader Lingyu Technology, would benefit them the most. Of course, those voices were quickly labeled as conspirators and they vanished in the waves of public debate.

With Future Technology's ability, why would they need to have a conspiracy against the competition? Lingyu Technology's shit*ty games are comparable to <New Era>?

The quite interest thing was that the people defending Future Technology were the hardcore fans of Dota history and I am ATM. Because they cared so much, they hated it even more. When they were so disappointed at Lingyu Technology and decided to give Future Technology's <New Era> out of boredom, they instantly realized that the game they defended for was a pile of sh*t. Therefore, Future Technology easily took the influx of Lingyu Technology players and the number of registration broke through 50 million with an estimated revenue breaking through 400 million RMB, shattering two records in the mobile game industry consecutively.

Its dominance could not be challenged.

The victory was already decided on the main battlefield, but the

crossfire had yet to cease.

Following the series of negative press and the direct result of downward pressure on revenue, Lingyu Technology's stock price triggered 10 consecutive circuit breaks and led the index in stock depreciation as the poorest performance company after the June stock market collapse.

The total market cap was slashed off by 70% and broke through 1.5 billion. To avoid triggering loan clauses, Lingyu Technology had to increase collateral assets and pledged the about to be completed Lingyu building at the value of 530 million to the bank before it finally stopped the plunge.

Deep in red and excessive loan, Lingyu Technology was pushed into the corner without any solution.

But at the time, Future Technology began making its moves.

First, Future Technology published a statement on its official site to directly respond to the public opinion and condemn the majority shareholders Ling Zhongtian's illegal action against Future Technology, and officially sent the lawyer letter to Ling Zhongtian.

Was Future Technology prepared to sue Lingyu Technology? Regardless of the result of the lawsuit, investors were hopeless with Lingyu Technology's future.

The next day, Lingyu Technology once again triggered the circuit breaker. Four days later, Lingyu Technology ended the week with 980 million market cap. Within four short days, Lingyu Technology lost the value of a building. To avoid triggering the clause, Ling Zhongtian had to increase the pledged asset, this time it was 33% of his share.

He had no other choice, if he didn't pledge in more asset, the company would be forced to go into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. When that happens, not only will he lose everything, he will also have to carry a debt of 300 million.

The about to be completed Lingyu building costed 870 million and it was built with debt. The new game development and promotion had eaten away most of the profit, from the current status quo, the investments were unrecoverable.

The lawyer letter was like declaring war. It only ignited the prelude to the battle.

When Lingyu Technology broke the record for the highest monthly decrease, Future Technology's president began to increase Lingyu Technology's share on the secondary market and became the biggest shareholder at 37%. Because it was not disclosed, Jiang Chen was fined 600 thousand by the security commission for an illegal transaction.

But comparable to the profit he gained by shorting Lingyu Technology, the punishment was pocket change to Jiang Chen.

Lingyu Technology ultimately changed hand.

...

Lingyu Technology building had yet to finish the renovation, but under the demand of the new president, they organized a conference room with a row of table and chairs.

Also based on the demand of the new president, a special shareholder meeting was announced.

As to the identity of the new president, it was obviously Jiang Chen.

Every shareholder's face was gloom... No, to be more precise, other than the people sitting at the end of the table, everyone's face was gloom.

Jiang Chen leaned against the chair as he scanned all the shareholders present. Other than the Ling Zhongtian with white hair, he was surprised to find someone he knew.

Sensing Jiang Chen's sight, Zhang Jianfeng smiled friendly at him.

[Why is he here?]

Jiang Chen still had some impression with Zhang Jianfeng. He

represented 361 Corporation before during the negotiation with Future Technology. Although nothing came to fruition, in the end, Jiang Chen had high praises regarding this talent.

361 Corporation want to be involved in this?

Jiang Chen muttered in his mind, but his expression didn't change in the slightest. He still maintained the bright smile and started speaking.

"Everyone, I think you should all thank me."

[Thank your mom!]

All the shareholders cursed in their mind, but no one dared to speak out loud. As to why-

"If it wasn't for me to increase the holding of your company's share which halted the plunge of Lingyu Technology's share price, the share in your hands would be scrap paper." Jiang Chen shrugged.

Ling Zhongtian slowly looked over, the aged face no longer resembled this once proud prodigy. He once made his goal to become the Steve Jobs of mobile games, but in those blurred eyes, there was only a deep weariness left.

"To be the meat on someone's chopping board is to be at someone's mercy." The cracked lips opened and squeezed a

sentence full of hatred.

"If you knew today would happen, why did you do it." Jiang Chen directly responded.

Ling Zhongtian was out of words and didn't say anything else, he just stared at the document on the table and blanked out.

<Lingyu Technology Asset Restructure Proposal>

"Ahem, based on the current performance of the company, as the President, I think I should do something," he paused, Jiang Chen looked at the crowd holding their breath, a faint smile flashed across his face. But then the following sentence he said made every shareholder's mood plunge into the abyss.

"That's right. We are planning to initiate asset restructure... So first, I plan to sell the building-"

Who to sell it to? Is that even a question?

Left hand to right hand, Future Technology needed a headquarter fitting for its name.

Chapter 170: Split the Market

"This is impossible! You can't do this!"

"Mr. Jiang Chen, please don't bring your personal grudges into the shareholder meeting. I understand differences exist between you and ex-president Ling Zhongtian..."

"This is called asset restructuring? This is robbery! Your motion will not be passed. Even if you are the biggest shareholder, Lingyu Technology will not permit you to do whatever you wish!"

...

Jiang Chen sipped from his tea on the table. Then, he sank into the chair relaxingly with his eyes narrowed, looking at the outraged shareholders. His gaze stopped on Ling Zhongtian for a brief moment, but the old man didn't look at him. He was still gravely staring at the documents on the table.

He had already lost hope.

Jiang Chen shook his head as he looked at the only person calmly sitting there – Zhang Jianfeng.

361 Corporation held 5% of Lingyu Technology. Although the ownership percentage was not high, it must have been purchased at a premium. This time Lingyu Technology's share plummet definite had an impact on 361 Corporation.

On the other hand, as the third-party platform, 361 operated the servers for Dota under the consent of Lingyu Technology. Although 361's server didn't suffer the same fate as the permanent loss of Lingyu Technology's user data, it certainly was negatively affected.

As the representative sent by 361 Corporation, Jiang Chen didn't quite understand the motive behind Zhang Jianfeng's smiling face.

What is 361 thinking?

But regardless of what they had in mind, Jiang Chen was going to put the final nail in the coffin for Lingyu Technology.

"Before the vote, I want everyone to consider this. Lingyu Technology has fallen from cloud nine and has become an unprofitable corporation. Without exaggeration, it is facing the risk of being delisted. However, I am still here. If I leave, do you know what that means? After the shareholders meeting, the stock will resume trading this afternoon. Whether it is going up or going down, would be based on the decision of everyone here."

Jiang Chen's words turned everyone, but Zhang Jianfeng, pale.

Because of the shareholders meeting, the temporary suspension of the stock garnered a chance for Lingyu Technology to breathe. Furthermore, Jiang Chen's recent increase in his holdings definitely added a shot of adrenaline to the investors. If it became a signal for using Lingyu Technology as a shell company to list, after

Lingyu Technology consecutive circuit breaks, it would be unrealistic for the stock to skyrocket.

But if the restructuring plan failed, and Jiang Chen decreases his holding of Lingyu Technology, then it would be adding salt to Lingyu Technology's already massive wound. Once the stock resumed trading this afternoon, Lingyu Technology would not be able to escape the fate of its continuous freefall.

Therefore, whether or not the stock in all the shareholder's hands become a piece of scrap paper would be at the discretion of Jiang Chen.

At this time, someone stood up and threatened, "361 Corporation is also one of the shareholders, even if you forfeit your shares, they will start-

"Ahem, 361 Corporation maintains the same stance as the new president. If President Jiang chooses to decrease his holding, for 361, your company will lose its investment value." Zhang Jianfeng shattered that person's fantasy.

Seeing the person sit down at a complete loss, Jiang Chen looked at Zhang Jianfeng in surprise, but he didn't say anything.

"If there are no other opinions, let's start the voting process," Jiang Chen announced as he scanned everyone in the room.

After the death like announcement, all the shareholders cast

their dispirited vote.

...

The proposal passed without a doubt. Only Ling Zhongtian voted against it.

The restructuring plan was as follows:

First, Lingyu Technology is renamed Chenfeng Entertainment.

Lingyu Technology will sell the about-to-be-completed Lingyu Technology building at a price of 600 million, and also bear the obligation for debt repayment.

Because of a major error caused by his decision, ex-president Ling Zhongtian will be removed as a shareholder following company protocol, a vote where greater than two-thirds of shareholders agree, and his held shares will be forcefully transferred to other shareholders at market price.

Based on the distribution plan negotiated, Jiang Chen's shares will increase to 40%, 361's holding changes to 21%, becoming the second-largest shareholder.

Everyone knew Ling Zhongtian would lose a lot once the restructuring is complete. It would not be impossible to recover the market cap, but no one wanted to speak to him.

Ling Zhongtian accepted the result in silence. He shakenly stood up from his spot and left the office.

Everything here had nothing to do with him anymore.

He started to feel regret, but what could regret do now?

Business is like a battlefield. Any mercy could be fatal.

After the partnership with Future Technology and 361 Corporation, Lingyu's future would be bright.

But why would that matter? It had nothing to do with him anymore.

He received the same fate as the Steve Jobs he idolizes, leaving the company he started. The only difference was, he could never come back.

Seeing the trembling figure leave, Jiang Chen fell deep in thought.

...

When the meeting ended, the shareholders began to leave, but Zhang Jianfeng stayed behind.

As if Jiang Chen expected him to stay, he also remained seated and looked at him with a smile.

"We meet again, President Jiang." Zhang Jianfeng walked toward Jiang Chen and extended his right hand.

In less than two months' time, Future Technology has already developed to the point where they could sit equally on the same table.

"That's right. What do you think of the hand I had just played?" Jiang Chen shook Zhang Jianfeng's hand as he smiled mischievously.

"Ruthless," Zhang Jianfeng only gave a one-word response.

Jiang Chen laughed as he leaned on the chair, not responding.

If Ling Zhongtian successfully destroyed Future Technology's server data, he would definitely do the same thing.

But unfortunately, that was the reality of things.

"With a thunderous stance, a critical hit was given to his opponent, worthy of the name "dictator", was the headline of BBC."

"Mr. Zhang is overrating me." The odd time Jiang Chen was humble.

"But President Jiang doesn't think this decision lack consideration?" Zhang Jianfeng pulled up a chair and sat beside Jiang Chen as he began to talk in a casual tone.

"Oh?" Jiang Chen responded in a disagreeing tone.

"Are you involved with Lingyu Technology's server?"

"No." Jiang Chen smiled.

"The security system was customized by 361 Corporation."

"That's unfortunate. Ling Zhongtian only bought insurance for the server but didn't buy it for the game's data. Would you pay the penalty for this?"

"For the loss of data, our programmers have already provided support to the police," Zhang Jianfeng casually said.

"Isn't the hacker already caught?" Jiang Chen also responded in a nonchalant tone.

"There is a hacker called Xie Lei. He has been in contact with Black Tiger before." Zhang Jianfeng locked his eyes onto Jiang Chen's.

"You are still bloating like usual, but you know it is useless on me." Jiang Chen picked up the teacup on the table as he smiled at him.

Funny. Would the contact person be enough to confirm a crime? If so, it would be a pity for those people.

Without evidence, everything was bullsh*t.

The silence ensued for half a minute.

"President Jiang doesn't seem to care about the interest of Lingyu Technology?" Zhang Jianfeng's topic suddenly changed as he looked in the direction of the door.

"Do you think <New Era> needs the resources of Lingyu Technology? We already controlled the high grounds of the market," Jiang Chen said nonchalantly as he put down the cup in his hand.

[The best part is about to come.]

"Would you not consider a partnership? If it utilized 361 phone helper's platform, <New Era>'s user base would climb to new heights."

"<New Era> currently will not consider opening third-party

servers," Jiang Chen rejected expressionlessly.

[Funny. Not only would it involve cloud computing, but even if I gave the game to you, without the modified server, maintenance cost alone would make you go deep into the red.]

"Since President Jiang is confident that you can control the premium game market, what's your opinion on casual games?"

Even with the existing high-quality premium games, casual games have not lost their market.

Jiang Chen obviously considered pushing out a few casual games like Angry Birds, and Temple Run, but the plan was never fulfilled.

The reason was simply that those games depended on creativity, not software. Although the apocalypse's technology was impeccable, it was pointless for casual games. Future Technology didn't possess any talents in game development. Therefore, the plan had to be rejected.

But Zhang Jianfeng brought it up again.

"You mean?" Jiang Chen was quite interested.

"We can work together." Zhang Jianfeng crossed his finger and genuinely looked at Jiang Chen. "Lingyu Technology, no, Chenfeng Entertainment. Right now, it is a company we control together right? We can definitely collaborate together with our

talent base, and start a new project with the main focus being on the downstream market. Using 361 phone helper and Future 1.0, we could use both channels to promote it."

"With the power of the two companies, we can easily split the entire mobile game market!" In the end, Zhang Jianfeng was almost annunciating word by word.

Jiang Chen paused for a second before he started laughing.

"Did you selectively choose to ignore Baidu and Tencent?"

"On the mobile platform, our ability is no less than any of them. Maybe President Jiang should be more confident with our alliance." Zhang Jianfeng smiled.

"I don't plan on giving this building up." Jiang Chen stared at the ceiling.

"Of course, as a trophy. The fact that it belongs to you now won't change."

The building with a cost of 870 million was sold at a discount of 600 million. They were at least the second-biggest shareholder of Chenfeng Entertainment, 361 Corporation was certainly willing to cut the lost.

"What about the previous Chenfeng employees?" Jiang Chen asked softly.

He originally planned to cut them completely, but now it seemed like it would be a waste to not use them.

"Work at the previous location? Or lease a floor in this building? It would be your decision." Zhang Jianfeng had a bright smile on because he knew Jiang Chen was tempted.

No one would reject a cake that was put right in front of their mouth.

"If you brought up the partnership, in the beginning, we could have worked together a long time ago." Jiang Chen suddenly laughed.

"But it is still not too late right?" Zhang Jianfeng got up, extending his right hand once again.

"That's right. Because I think we should split this market."

Also standing up, Jiang Chen held onto the extended hand with a triumphant smile on his face.

Chapter 171: The Preparation before returning to the Apocalypse

The same afternoon, Lingyu Technology announced a statement. The shareholders passed the restructuring proposal. Ling Zhongtian was removed from the board, the company was officially renamed Chenfeng Entertainment, and the company's stock would remain suspended until the completion of its asset restructuring.

The news spread to all the shareholders like a long due storm finally passing a draught-dried land, and they began cheering. The people that cut their loss were depressed by their decision of not having confidence in the company...

All in all, these people thought of Jiang Chen as Jesus Christ.

Future Technology and 361 Corporation both possessed shares. One has been valued at over a billion by Wall Street Analysts at its inception, while one was already listed on Nasdaq with a market cap of over ten billion.

It left too many people too much room for the imagination.

Graciously, Jiang Chen made headline again.

The young billionaire once again enters people's vision. The charming smile, the calm attitude, attracting the heart of countless girls...

Ok, they really don't care about Jiang Chen's looks.

Being famous didn't seem to create too much of a hassle in his life. Different from celebrities in the entertainment industry, most of his fans were very rationale.

The people that want to marry into wealthy would not flap towards him like bees. It would be too unclassy. They would often pretend to be a frail and innocent girl, "encountering" him under his building, and "accidentally" starting a "rich CEO fell in love with me" drama...

But unfortunately, Jiang Chen was known to not go to work and the community he lived in was also somewhere random people could not enter. Their plan ultimately would fail.

The "irrational" fans used the security team in the community to sent him love letters and attached a duck face selfie inside.

Jiang Chen at first was looking forward to reading the letters to see how the beauties have been conquered by his "charm", and how they have fallen under his jeans. Don't question, Jiang Chen never said he didn't like to hear flattering words.

But he was quickly bored.

All the love letters had the same content, revolving around "I want to give you a baby," and "let's hook up?"...

The directness even made Jiang Chen, who was proud of his lack of boundaries, "shy."

He gave the rest of letters to Ayesha and told the security to throw all letters of this kind into the garbage. After telling them not to bother him with it, he left this in the back of his mind.

Chinese was indeed a deep and profound language. What Jiang Chen meant by taking care of them was to throw them out, but Ayesha interpreted as examination.

Obviously misunderstanding Jiang Chen's intention, she had the thought of picking another wife for her husband as she patiently read through a few love letters.

As a "qualified wife," she will not be jealous towards husband's other partners, she will obediently share with her and take care of him...

Take back what she said, she also gave up.

As a "qualified wife", instincts told her that these women have impure motives.

These love letter finally didn't escape the fate of the paper shredder.

...

It was already November, and based on Miss Sun Jiao's description, the apocalypse must be covered in thick snow.

But Wanghai City was still sunny and mild. Even deep into the fall, it still didn't feel cold at all.

To be honest, Jiang Chen not only once had the thought of not going back to the other side.

Since he already was a winner in his life here.

Luxurious mansion, top-end car, and beautiful girls. Everything he ever dreamt of was achieved.

But on the other side, there was only danger.

At this moment, he relaxingly lied beside his private pool on top of Ayesha's legs and was getting his ears cleaned out for him.

The side of his face felt the softness of her legs. Her fragrance lingered around his nose. The tip of her hair occasionally brushed across his face and tingled with his heart. The soft and gentle breathing beside his ear...

"Mhmm! It's done now." A delighted smile appeared on Ayesha's face as she gently blew on Jiang Chen's ear and put away the ear

pick.

"Eh-, done already? A bit more." Because it was so comfortable, it was the odd time Jiang Chen was demanding.

"But, it's already clean. It would hurt you if I do more," Ayesha said faintly with a blushed face.

"No problem! Please continue."

Facing her husband's unreasonable demand, Ayesha face burned as she began debating. Although it was the duty of a "qualified wife" to satisfy the husband's demand, if she continued, it would damage her husband's ear.

In this case, she must think of a compromising plan...

"Umm, could I lick it?" She suppressed the shyness in her heart as she whispered into Jiang Chen's ear.

"?!"

Jiang Chen, in the sluggish mood, clearly was drawn into it.

Seeing her husband was interested, Ayesha's face became a deeper shade of red. She looked at the cleaned out ear as she stuck her tongue out and buried her head in it.

The soft tongue, along with the warm breathe, approached slowly...

But an untimely phone call interrupted this intimate atmosphere.

Ayesha looked away with a blushed face, licking someone's ear was too embarrassing for her.

Jiang Chen couldn't pretend to be lazy anymore as he got up to pick up the phone.

"Hello?" Jiang Chen picked up with an unpleased tone.

"Hmm? Voice sounds angry... Did I annoy you?" Liu Yao said coyly.

"You ruined my good time," Jiang Chen said "fiercely". Ayesha, standing on the side, heard it as her red face turned brighter. She lowered her head, as her mind went elsewhere.

"Do you need me to compensate you?" Li Yao said energetically.

"Ahem, what do you mean."

Oh no, he was hard.

Jiang Chen turned, so his back was facing Ayesha.

But what he didn't expect was that the blushed Ayesha got closer and stood in front of him.

A shy but tender smile surfaced on her face as she slowly kneeled down. A pair of smooth hands self-assertedly reached for his clothes.

"Oooh-!"

"Why are you making a weird sound?" Liu Yao asked curiously.

"Ahem, nothing. Umm, if you have something to tell me, be quick."

Jiang Chen was not in the most ideal state.

"It's nothing special. A lot of entertainment companies have sent me invitations to star in movies."

Since Jiang Chen accepted Liu Yao as his mistress, Jiang Chen paid the penalty of one million for breach of contract. After that, Liu Yao had been staying at home with nothing to do.

"Why did you suddenly got famous?"

"Because of you," Liu Yao said in a sweet voice.

"Me?" He gazed at the pair of eyes below him as he experienced mental and physical sensation at the same time. Jiang Chen took a deep breath as he almost didn't manage to hold on.

"Yes, yes, you have a Weibo account right? Other than the default followers, you only followed me, therefore..." Liu Yao's voice sounded frail as if she was afraid Jiang Chen would get angry. So, she carefully said, "Therefore people thought there was something between us... Therefore."

"Siiiiiii... Ah? No, that's fine, I don't care about this news," Jiang Chen squeezed out a few words between his teeth as his hand gently rubbed Ayesha's luscious hair.

She felt the gentleness on her hair as her blue eyes narrowed happily.

But then, it was even harder for Jiang Chen to resist.

"That's great! I was worried that you would not like me doing that anymore because of this..." Liu Yao was delighted.

"Nope!"

"Umm, can I go act in a film then? No problem! No kissing scene-" Since she was now his mistress, Liu Yao was afraid Jiang Chen would be jealous.

"Okay!"

"And also, the film producer wants to acquire your investment..."
Liu Yao carefully asked.

"Granted!"

"Love you lots, muaaa~ Oh, when are we going to Pannu Island for vacation. I heard it's summer there all year round... Hmmmm? Are you listening?"

"Yes!" No, Jiang Chen couldn't hold on any longer.

"Wait," Liu Yao held the phone as her eyes turned suspicious. She suddenly covered her mouth realizing something. "Ah! You must be doing something naughty!"

"N...No."

"Wait, no, this sound would not be wrong! You must" She sensed the voice was off.

"Mhmm!"

Fine. Seeing the gentleness in her eyes, Jiang Chen was too joyful to lie to his body any longer.

...

If it were not for the people that he couldn't let go of, he probably wouldn't go back.

The next morning, Jiang Chen made a trip to Xinlong Food Processing Plant.

Following his instructions, Zheng Hongjie cleaned out a new warehouse to store the surplus goods. The goods inside would also not be registered on anything. Although he didn't know the boss' intention, he didn't ask.

But he was not here to acquire food. He already prepared enough food to pass through the winter.

He directly found Zheng Hongjie and ordered him to arrange the export, and then increase production as soon as possible.

The deepwater port at Pannu Islands had already been completed, the next step of Island Conquering mission could begin.

After taking care of the miscellaneous tasks, Jiang Chen headed back to the mansion and started to time travel.

Chapter 172: Winter is coming

Rather than saying winter was coming, it was more fitting to say winter was here.

His vision was covered by the monochrome silver as the entire pool was filled with snow. A thick layer of snow covered the mansion, and the edges of the roof were decorated with daunting icicles. Like a castle standing in the northern kingdom. Solemn. Proud.

But Jiang Chen was not in the mood to enjoy the atmosphere of his mansion. He only wore a thin t-shirt.

The second he stepped into the apocalypse, he began to shiver uncontrollably.

[This weather is too f*cking cold.]

Even with his body condition strengthened by the genetic vaccine, he couldn't withstand it anymore.

Jiang Chen covered his arms with his hand as he dashed into the mansion from the backyard. The last time he was here, he started his time travel beside the pool because he was lazy, but he sure suffered on his way back.

Different from the extreme conditions outside, the mansion was as warm as spring. The broken wall and window had been long

repaired by Sun Jiao, and after a series of modifications and improvements, as long as the window was closed, the mansion would not be bothered by the severe wind chills outside.

But before he even gained his footing in the mansion, Sun Jiao, who also ran toward him, pushed him onto the sofa.

"You are finally back." This girl's voice certainly had a hidden bitterness to it.

"Uh, a lot happened over there." Jiang Chen said apologetically.

Although it was not entirely accurate, he did become lazy after having too much fun.

Jiang Chen seemed to have sensed something, but she didn't point it out. Her beautiful eyes dreamily gazed into his.

Jiang Chen looked away as he was shy from the passionate gaze, but he discovered Sun Jiao was holding something in her hand.

"Eh? What is this?"

"Ah, this is, umm, this is..." Out of nowhere, Sun Jiao's face immediately turned red as there was a sense of panic to her voice.

"Towel?" Jiang Chen asked with uncertainty.

"It's a scarf! Fool!" After seeing her proud work being slandered as a towel, Miss Sun Jiao was immediately enraged.

The furious Sun Jiao gave a solid punch in Jiang Chen's chest, and then she pulled out the scarf, forcefully putting it around his neck out of shame.

"Cough cough! Are you trying to strangle me!" Although the softness was continually squeezing onto him because of the violent action, the suffocating feeling around his neck canceled the sensation.

"Stop, stop moving, just resist a bit longer!" Sun Jiao with a blushed face said fiercely.

"Wait, why do I have to resist against wearing a scarf-"

"You are so talkative!"

After awhile, the scarf was finally put around Jiang Chen's neck.

Sun Jiao got up from Jiang Chen's body with a blushed face as she looked away.

"Looks pretty good. It would be even better if you give it to me normally. Especially because this is not how you wear a scarf..." Sun Jiao, with a troubled smile, pulled the scarf around his neck. This girl was clearly confused about the difference between a rope and scarf.

The pure black scarf was without any pattern. With a beginner's skill, it would be too difficult to put any patterns on it. But being able to knit the scarf was an accomplishment nonetheless.

Hearing Jiang Chen's praise, Sun Jiao's eyes immediately lit up. As to the ridicule of "method of tying the scarf," she selectively ignored the sentence.

"Really! Haha, this is what I am saying. How could I mess up on a scarf." With a red face, and scratching the back of her head, c*ckiness was written all over her face.

"So why did you think about knitting a scarf?" After putting on the scarf properly, Jiang Chen asked nonchalantly.

"Because..." Sun Jiao's mind drifted again. Her face changed to a bright red hue. "In the magazines before the war, it said, girlfriends should knit scarves for their boyfriend. Therefore..."

"It is not a requirement, or the better way to put it, the girl that is willing to knit a scarf for her boyfriend would be a rare species." Jiang Chen let out a sigh as she smiled.

Jiang Chen was quite touched by her.

"What do you mean a rare species!" Sun Jiao gave Jiang Chen a dirty look.

"It means adorable," Jiang Chen rushed to explain.

"Adorable?!" Her expression suddenly softened, and her bright eyes looked around shyly.

At this time, Jiang Chen suddenly noticed Yao Yao standing on top of the stairs. This small loli pouted her lips as the cute eyes stared straight at the scarf around his neck.

"Ooo! Too devious..."

As if she heard the noise in the living room, Lin Lin walked in from the side door with her pure white hair.

Still not hesitant to bad mouth people.

"Psh, it's only a dumb devil couple. Why would you guys display affection in the living room? Go close the door and do what you did-." But before she finished, the words were stuck in her throat. A grim sight instantly locked onto her vision as she was forced to swallow her unfinished sentence.

"Ahem. I think as the owner of the mansion, I need to do something now," Jiang Chen mustered to himself.

"That's right. For example, building a wooden shack outside for her." A devil-like smile spread on Sun Jiao's face as she also enjoyed the feeling of bullying Lin Lin.

In the end, she still could not be defiant.

"You are all bullying me." With tears, Lin Lin escaped back to her room/lab with a sad expression.

This narcissistic and bad-tempered girl, always instantly forgets to stand her ground.

Seeing Lin Lin's fleeting figure, a smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

[I wonder if she finished her task yet. I'll pick a time to take a look.]

...

There was no fireplace in the future. Except for the poorest survivors, no one would use fire to generate heat. Jiang Chen's mansion obviously didn't have that either. The reason the place was so warm was due to the heating grids placed within the wall. This device was extremely convenient, and it would provide heat as long as it was connected to electricity.

The heat resistant electric wire would not be burned by EMPs. Therefore, the heating grid became one of the few electronic devices that was not destroyed by the nuclear blast.

In the top floor office, Jiang Chen and Sun Jiao stood together and gazed into the distance.

The thick snowflakes twirled in the north wind as they raided through every corner of the world. The ice shards that occasionally smashed on the window played a whimpering noise as it crashed into the frozen window.

Even if he was just looking, he could still feel the coldness that could freeze one's soul.

"Such heavy snowfall." After a while, Jiang Chen could only produce four words while looking outside.

"This is not too bad. Usually, it would start snowing in October." In regards to the snow, Sun Jiao's expression was rather calm. "It was rumored that when the war just ended, the entire world was covered by nuclear winter. It was the same cruel scene every day. I wonder how did the people outside of the survival shelters survive."

Outside of their walls, apartments built with concrete were built for residents of Fishbone base. The Fishbone base that "didn't lack money" would obviously not mistreat its people. Every family was connected with heat and electricity. The life here was so much better than in the ghetto.

On the empty streets, a pickup truck, modified to be a snow shoveling vehicle, was working hard to push the snow out of the base. The patrol on the wall regularly walked around to watch for

any incoming danger. The white winter suit made him look like a snowman carrying a rifle.

"With a snowstorm this big, the mutated humans shouldn't be able to invade us." Although it certainly was inconvenient to the construction of the base, the thick snowfall gave a hint of tranquility.

"Speaking of mutated humans, Zhao Gang, who you sent out scouting, brought back some interesting information."

"Oh?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows.

"There are at least three thousand mutated humans in the 7th area. A lot of signs indicate that they are preparing war supplies."

Every mutated human was a natural warrior. If there were actually three thousand of them, even if they sent one thousand people, it would be an unstoppable force that the Fishbone base could not resist with only a population of two hundred.

No, it would be difficult even for the Sixth Street.

"Hopefully this snow will bring them some trouble." Jiang Chen watched the flying snowflakes as a worried expression flashed on his face.

"Mutated humans are known for their cold resistance. This amount of snow will do nothing to them. We can only pray that

this storm will kill more of their slaves. That is the only way that would make things difficult for them," Sun Jian's voice was stern.

Slaves? Speaking of this, How did the dancers in Jia City survive under the violent force of the mutated human?

Jiang Chen shook his head as he put his thoughts away. Then he asked, "Is that all?"

"Also, based on Zhao Gang, when he returned from the 7th area, he encountered a group of survivors fleeing from Shenxiang Town."

"Survivors fleeing?" Jiang Chen touched his chin in thought.

"Mhmm. They originally belong to the survivor groups in Shenxiang Town, but the survivor group was wiped already. Zhao Gang brought them back. I ordered people to keep them outside of the base for now." Sun Jiao nodded before she took out a tablet to show a map to Jiang Chen.

"Shenxiang Town is between Qingpu and 7th area. It is on the Taifu River, a way for the mutated humans to enter Wanghai City. There were around seven hundred survivors there, and because of the lack of mutant activity around the area as well as the lack of external threat, they lacked an organized system. They only established a simple defense outside of the town with a civilian force of 21 people..."

"Therefore they were enslaved by the mutated humans?" Hearing this, Jiang Chen guessed the outcome.

"That's right." Sun Jiao nodded, "A force of 40 mutated humans were stationed in Shenxiang Town as they established an out post there. Based on this, they are indeed going to take the route through Shenxiang town to Wanghai."

That meant that they would go through Qingpu, not Songjiang.

It was the worst outcome. Deep in Jiang Chen's heart, he hoped to avoid direct conflict with mutated humans. Even if they really arrived in Carman Corporation and obtained the improved FEV virus, they would only torment Jia City.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath as he asked in a serious tone.

"What about the seven hundred survivors?"

"Based on the survivors who are there, because of the snow blocking the roads, they are temporarily imprisoned in Shenxiang Town and have not moved yet." Hearing this, Sun Jiao looked at Jiang Chen.

Snow blocking the road? A "singled out" mutated human out post.

Watching the snow on the window, a smile suddenly surfaced on Jiang Chen's face.

"This is an opportunity."

"You mean?"

"Take them out! Reinforce Shenxiang town's defense, and intercept the mutated human force there, blocking them out of Qingpu!"

Chapter 173: Kinetic Skeleton

Comparing direct firepower, a soldier wearing a T-3 power armor had no inherent difference to a mutated human with a steel plate covering the front of its body.

In a one on one scenario, power armor, with its high mobility and adaptability, would quickly take down the almost defenseless back of the mutated human. But if it escalated to a full-scale battle, the power armors advantage would be mitigated as the battle would usually turn into cover fire.

During the last crossfire with the mutated human, Jiang Chen already learned his lesson.

The 10 T-3 power armors had no advantage in firepower against the thirty something mutated human. It was even fair to say that they were at a disadvantage the entire time. In the end, they barely won with the advantageous positioning they had, but they lost with the cost of one power armor and multiple backup fuel rods.

If Jiang Chen had a few more cannons, the situation would be drastically different.

At the same time, the ability to produce heavy weaponry was fundamental to the existence of a survival base.

From any perspective, Fishbone must develop its own heavy weaponry!

So Jiang Chen already started doing that.

The electric pulse cannon technology he purchased from Zhao Chenwu had been completely understood by the scientists at the base. Although the production condition at the base was still limited, after half a month, the Fishbone workers still managed to use the limited facility to manufacture six electric pulse cannons.

This vehicle mounted electric pulse cannon was used as the primary weapon on the tank during the war, but right now it was obviously not feasible to acquire a tank. Therefore, Jiang Chen thought of a compromise.

Wield the electric pulse cannon onto the improved truck, and use steel reinforcement to strengthen the armor of the truck. Then, place a soldier on top to fire the cannon.

Therefore, the odd looking electric pulse cannon vehicle was created by Jiang Chen's wild imagination.

Also, he gave this thing a name that couldn't be more childish - Tiger.

Low armor, medium mobility, high range, high damage. It was extremely effective in rural areas with scattered structures, but it was a target in the city. Although the design was extreme, they had to work with what they had.

...

On the other hand, following the production of the hummingbird drone, patrolling outside of the base has been passed on to those palm sized little guys. The hummingbird drone has built up a force of over one hundred units, which was more than enough to create an attack force. Although those little guys carried a limited amount of ammo, once there were enough of them, they were capable of deadly attacks.

...

The attack on Shenxiang Town was set to be five days later. The survivors in the base had since been busy.

Although attacking in the winter didn't sound like the smartest decision, since it was the boss's decision, they would relentlessly execute it.

The military production factory worked around the clock, and the workers under Jiang Chen's instructions installed the electric pulse cannon on the back of the modified trucks. The training ground then became crowded as the soldiers in winter suits, under the command of Cheng Weiguo, began to train.

Although everyone was preparing relentlessly, Jiang Chen wasn't too concerned about this attack.

It was only a force of 40 mutated humans. Not only did the

Fishbone base have the fire support from the Tiger, but they also had helicopters that acted as gunships.

Leaving the mansion wearing a thick winter suit, Jiang Chen headed straight to Jiang Lin's lab.

For the scientist passionate about aerospace, Jiang Chen had a keen interest in him. Not only did Jiang Chen clean out a lab for him, but he also gave him a budget of 1000 crystals a month to purchase related equipment.

Although aerospace technology was not helpful to the Fishbone base now, if rockets were created, not only can they be shot into the sky, but if they're shot downwards, they could be used as missiles.

Of course, the purpose of the trip was not to inquire about the missiles, but for something else.

When he pushed opened the lab door, Jiang Chen stepped into the room, and quickly closed the door behind him.

He shook off the snow on his body before walking inside the room.

"Ahem, what are you working on?"

A dazzling amount of electronic parts were randomly stored in the corner of the room. Some of them were needed for the launch

of the rockets, and some of them were junk he brought back from Fake Leg Specialty store. Although Jiang Lin didn't plan to continue his father's business, he still moved his stuff here.

"Rocket engine..." Jiang Lin wore protective goggles with a welding tool in his hand as he concentrated on the parts on the table.

Looking at the grease covered hair, Jiang Chen didn't want to guess the last time he showered.

It's great to be passionate about your own business, but...

"Did you complete the task I gave you?" Jiang Chen walked over to a mechanical leg lying on the ground as he stood beside him.

"Done. It's on the shelf to your right, and the manual is on the shelf next to it." Jiang Lin said as carefully wielded a single microchip onto the engine, not turning his head.

"Just need to wait till the weather clears up... Install a smart power control into the engine, and then install signal blockage at the tip of the rocket. I am a genius," Jiang Lin mustered to himself as he looked ecstatic.

Although Jiang Chen didn't know why.

"Kinetic skeleton, model K1". A line of small words was engraved on the metal strip as Jiang Chen read it out loud.

He looked at the mechanical frame in his hand and began to play with it. But after awhile, he still didn't have a single clue how it works. So, he took out the manual and began to read it step by step.

The light plastic steel metal attached to the four limbs, and the spine position was covered by scale like metal plates.

To put it simply, this thing was like a metal skeleton. Although it had a metallic feel to it, it didn't feel cumbersome to wear.

Jiang Chen moved his limbs and clenched his fingers, but he still didn't understand how it worked as a confused expression appeared on his face.

Seeing that boss wearing his masterpiece, Jiang Lin dropped what he was working on, cleaned his hand, and walked over.

"The start button is on your neck. You can try pressing it."

Following Jiang Lin's instruction, Jiang Chen skeptically placed his finger on his neck and quickly found a button. Then he tried pressing it down.

A faint static noise was heard as Jiang Chen felt a temporary numbness on the back of his neck. The next second he was completely shocked.

It was a surreal feeling. As if the metal strip became a part of his body. What maneuvered his body was no longer his own skeleton, but rather the metal skeleton attached to his body.

Jiang Chen moved his limbs as the shock on his face intensified.

Describing the feeling was difficult. Precisely, it seemed like the metal skeleton was really his own hand, but his real hand was only a tool he was using.

"Model K1 kinetic skeleton. Fake Legs Speciality store's masterpiece." A proud smile appeared on Jiang Lin's face, as he took a curved plastic steel plate from the side and pressed it onto the empty slot in front of Jiang Chen's chest.

"Removable armor made of supramolecular polyethylene. It is bullet-proof, so it can easily protect you against normal assault rifle bullets. The outside is sprayed with a reflective layer, so it has some defense against laser rifles. Of course, I don't recommend you take a few shots to test the strength of the armor.

After he finished, Jiang Lin brought over several curved armors and slotted them onto Jiang Chen's stomach, legs, and shoulders.

"Almost done." Jiang Lin stood up and clapped his hands together. He then took a tablet from the table and connected a wire to Jiang Chen's armor.

Jiang Chen looked at him as his fingers typed furiously on the

screen. Quickly, the numb electrocuted sensation from the back of his neck disappeared and was replaced by an astonishing connection of his nerves to his muscles.

It was not only simply the metal maneuvering his body, but the metal and body were simultaneously controlled by his brain.

Jiang Chen moved his limbs as he became more and more shocked.

Seeing the expression on the boss's face, Jiang Lin smiled and quickly backed away. With a please gesture, he said proudly, "Try hitting the sandbag."

Hearing that, Jiang Chen clenched the fist covered by the thin layer of armor as he used his entire strength to punch.

Boom-.

Dust blew everywhere.

The violent force caused the sandbag to cave inward as the metal hanging the sandbag began to squeak in a whimpering noise.

"Beautiful! Let me see. 971 kilograms, not bad." Jiang Lin nodded his head as he scratched his chin and began to adjust the data on the tablet.

[Not bad? This is insane!]

Jiang Chen astonishingly stared at his hand as he ridiculed in his mind.

A force of nearly one ton! An ordinary person's punch would be around 100 kilograms; he remembered Tyson could only punch with a force of 400 kilograms.

But the sandbag didn't get punched through. Its quality must be excellent.

While being shocked, Jiang Chen gave a few extra looks at the sandbag.

"Try the strength again." Jiang Lin quickly walked to the end of the room.

Jiang Chen moved his leg around to test. When he realized that his coordination was not hindered, he walked over.

There stood a metal box the size of a closet. The exposed part seemed similar to the weight of the sandbag.

A white metal covered signal light flashed unknowingly, the monitor on the side produced a faint light.

"Put your hand on the bar, and then use your maximum power to

lift it." Jiang Lin passed a bar-like thing to him as he smiled.

Following his instruction, Jiang Chen put his hands on the bar and lifted it up with his entire force.

<Strength: 64>

"Perfect!" Jiang Lin snapped as he said with excitement.

Compared to Jiang Lin's excitement, Jiang Chen's mood could be described as ecstatic.

With only a few metal frames, it could allow people to acquire strength greater than the genetic vaccine. If every soldier wore a set, Fishbone base's combat power would more than double.

Chapter 174: Out of stock?

If the power armor were the full body armor of the knight, then the kinetic skeleton would be an infantry's chainmail.

The entire mass was less than ten kgs. The supermolecular polyethylene could guard 7-12 rounds of point-blank shots from a 7.62 mm assault. If it were an assault rifle from the modern world, it would not even make a dent in the armor.

Afer equipping, the maximum weight carried by a single soldier would increase to 300 kilograms.

The power source was two pieces of battery the size of a fist and was placed above the pelvis area. After a complete charge, it would allow the equipped person to run at a speed of 12 km/hour carrying the 300 kilograms for one hour. Or, it could operate in normal combat conditions for 12 hours. The power could be charged through solar cells, or it could instantly be replenished with crystals.

It was fair to say, other than the aerospace technology that has yet to see results, a significant factor that Jiang Chen considered when recruiting Jiang Lin was the kinetic skeleton technology of the Fake Leg Specialty store. Although he didn't manage to continue the family business, being forced by his father, he still learned the essential skills.

When he personally experienced the power of Model K1 Kinetic Skeleton, Jiang Chen immediately proposed the feasibility of mass

equipping the force.

"Equipping the force?" Jiang Lin was confused when he heard Jiang Chen's question, but then an odd expression appeared on his face. "Do you know the time and cost to produce a set of kinetic skeleton like this?"

"How much?" Jiang Chen asked carelessly.

"Based on the official price in the Sixth Street, the current set you are wearing cost around 900 crystals. 900 crystals could purchase more than ten slaves if you give them rifles. Regardless of what kind of super soldier, they can't beat ten something rifles." Jiang Lin let out a sigh as he started to calculate the economics for Jiang Chen.

"But the Sixth Street no longer sells population."

Jiang Chen pressed the button on his neck as the faint static noise rose again and he took off the kinetic skeleton.

"The Sixth Street doesn't sell population, but other places do. For example Su City. They have the biggest slave market in Suhang province. They'll come to the Sixth Street next spring-" Jiang Lin tried to convince his boss.

"But we can't wait till next spring." Jiang Chen, with a smile, carried the kinetic skeleton in his hands. "When the snow melts next year, the mutated human will invade from 7th area to

Qingpu. We are the only force that's capable of putting up a defense. Therefore we will face the most pressure from them."

Hearing that, Jiang Lin's face immediately turned white.

He has never heard about this before. If he had heard about it, he would not have come to work here even if they beat him to death. The reason why he tried to convince the boss to give up the idea of mass production of the kinetic skeleton was the fact that he was worried his own research time for the rocket would be limited.

"Do you regret coming here?" Jiang Chen smiled.

Jiang Lin gulped as he looked away, dishearted. "No."

"Don't be afraid. Your heart beat already told me you are regretting it." Jiang Chen smiled as he patted him on the shoulder without criticising his fear. "It is okay to be afraid. People fear death for a reason. Since you are afraid, then follow what I have said."

"I heard that there are a few thousand mutated humans in the Seventh Area," Jiang Lin strugglingly said.

"To be exact, there are three thousand. Perhaps a bit more than that, but it's not something you need to worry about. Kinetic skeleton must be mass produced. Regardless how many crystals we spend, you must manufacture 50 sets before next year January," Jiang Chen used an irrefutable voice.

Even with a cost of 900 crystals per set, 50 sets would only be 45,000 crystals. Fishbone base didn't lack money. It was time to convert the wealth accumulated in the early phases into power.

Jiang Lin gulped again as he saw the seriousness in the boss' eyes as he nodded arduously.

"I'll try my best... But it can't be done with just me. I need help."

"Just tell me how much assistance you need."

"Let me think... The hand crafted metal skeleton would require ten people, welding the microchips would take 4, drawing the circuit board would need 8, as well as modifying the power system... Based on my estimation, I would require 40 workers to be able to complete a streamlined process. In this case, I could probably manage to complete 50 sets of kinetic skeletons before January." Jiang Lin had a troubled smile.

There was a total of 200 people in the base. Everyone had their own duties and responsibilities, it was impossible to assemble a team of 40.

But Jiang Chen's following words shocked him.

"I'll give you 80 people. Could you double the production?"

"Sure, but is there enough people in the base?" Jiang Lin had to ask.

"You don't have to worry about it. We'll have plenty of people soon. Right now, you only need to figure out how to design the production line, how to train your team, and what materials must be purchased. The production force will be ready in 5 days." Jiang Chen laughed.

The Fishbone base didn't have the people, but Shenxiang Town had them.

The seven hundred survivors captured by the mutated humans. He just needed to bring them back.

As to whether they would be obedient or not?

On the wasteland, there was no inherent difference between being captured and being saved.

If they wanted to continue to live, they must be obedient.

...

After coming out of Jiang Lin's lab, Jiang Chen headed to the community center to find the warehouse keeper Wang Qin.

When Jiang Chen came to the office, the girl with freckles was

going through her books as usual. When she saw Jiang Chen, her eyes lit up, as she stopped what she was doing, and got up to greet him.

"I am just here to check the status of the supplies in the base. Don't be so anxious," Jiang Chen gently smiled as he joked.

Wang Qin's face blushed shyly. She pushed her glasses up as she took out the tablet terminal and began to display the data to Jiang Chen.

First, it was crystals.

After the accumulation of several trades, the crystals stored in the Fishbone base had reached a frightening number of 790 thousand. Because of the addition of several production lines, the crystals spent last month reached 30 thousand. This included the purchase of raw materials, as well as direct consumption for fuel in industrial production.

Jiang Chen asked Wang Qin to save half a million crystals as liquid assets to purchase shares of the about to be established Sixth Street bank. The rest of the 290 thousand crystals would be used as production spending. Even with the addition of a kinetic skeleton line, the current amount of stored crystals was more than sufficient.

Then, it would be the firearms storage.

There were two hundred thousand rounds of ammo stored in the base, with sixty percent directly manufactured by the base. After they acquired Huizhong Mercenaries' ammo production line, Fishbone base began to work towards producing its own firearms.

Then, it would be the 5kg bombs. This is the standard ammo for the electromagnetic cannon.

Following the completion of the Tiger, the military factory's production has been shifting towards bombs. The current stock was two hundred rounds, with fifty being produced each day.

After a period of consumption, as well as the large quantity of replenishment since the last time he returned, the base currently stored 8 tons of rice, 2 tons of potato, and easy to store vegetables like cabbage and carrot totaled 5 tons. Sausage, marinated meat, and other preserved food added up to 2 tons. After Jiang Chen realized it was cheaper to purchase fresh food than canned food, Fishbone's cafeteria no longer provided canned food. All cans were only sold, or as an award to survivors that contributed to the base.

With the assumption of one pound of rice per day per person, this food would last the group of two hundred two years. But considering the addition of seven hundred survivors soon, the rate of food consumption would undoubtedly increase. Even with an increase in survivors, the current storage of food would last at least half a year.

"Also, the base is preparing to add a new kinetic skeleton production line. Jiang Lin will send the list of purchases over in a bit. Send someone to purchase it from the Sixth Street."

"Mhmm." Wang Qin nodded and then wrote Jiang Chen's words in the tablet. Following the increased quantity of supplies, one warehouse keeper was not enough. After asking for Wang Qin's opinion, Jiang Chen added a logistics department to the base's administration, responsible for managing warehouse supplies, daily consumption, and trade related tasks. Trade was previously the responsibility of Sun Jiao, but she seemed to get a headache with "small tasks" containing minuscule details, so she threw the duties to the logistics department.

The logistics department was of course led by Wang Qin. The department increased to five people, managing a total of six warehouses.

"I said you don't have to be so anxious." Seeing how the girl was taking notes seriously, Jiang Chen couldn't stop laughing.

Although she had matured compared to when she just got to the base, the trait of blushing did not change at all.

"Also, what's the status of Zhou Guoping's bar in the Sixth Street?"

After recollecting her previous calmness, Wang Qin pushed her glasses up and said in a focused tone, "4000 cans of beer were consumed in October resulting in a total profit of 40,000 crystals."

Hearing the news, Jiang Chen nodded.

He didn't care about the profitability of the bar. He was more keen on using the traffic generated to bring him intelligence. The beers were only a few bucks in the modern world which was nothing.

But of course, as the saying goes, although mosquitoes were small, meat was still meat, and the income from the beers was quite good.

"Also, there is something else," Wang Qin saw that Jiang Chen was in a good mood, but she hesitated for a moment before she spoke.

"Mhmm?"

"The raw material used to produce the automatic rifles and hummingbird drone, the Carm Treesap, is out of stock."

"Out of stock?" Jiang Chen frowned.

It was a big problem.

The threat of mutated human was approaching fast, the Fishbone base was working around the clock to produce firearms, and now Carm tree sap was out of stock?

"The plantation that provided us with Carm tree sap terminated

the contract, and paid us 1000 crystals as the penalty," Wang Qin said helplessly.

"Reason?"

"Following the increase in production on the Sixth Street, the price of Carm tree sap rose by 20%, which is much higher compared to the price signed on the contract. They also signed a large quantity long term deal with other companies. Therefore, they shamelessly terminated our contract." Wang Qin said in anger.

"So how much is left in the base?" Jiang Chen said in a serious tone.

"2 tons left. Enough to maintain production for one more month."

"Mhmm, I'll take care of this." Jiang Chen nodded.

[If the Sixth Street can't supply it, the Fishbone base can just produce it on our own.]

Chapter 175: Produce Ourselves

"Growing Carm Trees?" Sun Jiao thought for a second before a troubled look appeared on her face.

"Is there a problem? We could probably buy the sapling on the market. If we can't, I'll get Zhou Guoping to think of other ways." Jiang Chen didn't understand.

"No, it's not the problem with tree saplings, tree saplings are easy to obtain." Seeing that Jiang Chen seemed to be misinterpreting her meaning, Sun Jiao forced a bitter smile. "The problem is growing them."

"Growing? I remember these mutated plants were able to survive in the apocalypse's soil, is there any problems?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows.

Typical crops could not grow in the nuclear and biological contaminated soil, but mutated plants that survived the war could. Logically, anything that could grow in the Sixth Street, the Fishbone base could grow the same thing.

Hearing Jiang Chen's question, Sun Jiao facepalmed as she began patiently explaining the fundamentals.

"To grow anything on the wasteland, there are two factors to consider. One is radiation level, and two is soil contamination level.

As long as there is material exchange with the outside world, it can not avoid the impact of radiation. There is nothing in the apocalypse that is free of radiation. Not even the drinking water treated by the automatic water purifying equipment. It doesn't negatively affect humans because of the existence of the EP and special medication that reduces the radiation level to below the danger threshold. However, plants are not so lucky.

To ensure the planted apple does not mutate, the radiation level must be controlled to below 1. If the radiation level is above 5, even normal seeds buried into the ground will become abnormal. With the Sixth Street's technology, it is able to control the radiation level to around 3, which certainly reflects how valuable the fruit cans you brought are.

But the mutated plants that survived through natural selection are not that delicate. Their resistance to radiation is quite high. Take Carm trees for example. As long as radiation levels are below 40, it can grow normally. Most of the places on the wasteland have a threshold value between 10-20. As long as it's not in a nuclear crater, the radiation level will not reach 40.

The soil contamination is relatively easier to solve since soilless planting technology is incredibly mature in the apocalypse.

Therefore, the plantations in the apocalypse can be divided into two kinds.

One is the kind that uses soilless technology to grow crops.

There is a distinct advantage to growing crops this way is that it can easily control soil contamination, and the production area would also be greater compared to soil plants. The disadvantage is also evident. Mainly being the high cost. To use soilless technology to produce industrial raw materials like Carm tree sap would undoubtedly bankrupt the business. It normally would be used to grow luxury goods, such as not completely mutated fruit.

The signature building in the Sixth Street includes a soilless plantation tower. Of course, because of the appearance of fruit cans, this industry was on the brink of bankruptcy.

The other kind is normal soil plantation.

Simple and straightforward, planting the seeds and watering them would yield plants. Whether it would be done by human labor with scythe spreading the seeds or mechanical plantation, it would be up to the preference of the owner. It is used to mostly produce non-expensive mutated plants, such as the industrially used Carm tree sap, and different flavors of tobacco...

The advantage of this method is the low cost, but it has a strict requirement for the quality of the soil.

Take Carm trees for example. Only plants with soil contamination less than ten can be used to grow these trees. This type of soil is also extremely rare on the wasteland, so Carm tree sap production is not high even on the Sixth Street. Previously, this raw material had minimal demand, but during this period,

demand far exceeded supply."

"Couldn't we just purchase soilless equipment?" Jiang Chen was refusing to give up.

"Using soilless equipment to grow Carm trees, how much crystals would you use to obtain one ton of Carm tree sap." Sun Jiao facepalmed feeling helpless.

[This is problematic now.]

Jiang Chen's eyebrows began to twist as he fell into deep thought.

But then, he suddenly remembered Lin Lin.

[Yes! The Garden of Eden Project!

If it is possible to change the local biosphere, there is no reason there is no technology to change the condition of the soil!]

...

"Did you think of something?" Sun Jiao looked confusedly as Jiang Chen's always changing expression.

"Mhmm." The tip of Jiang Chen's mouth curled up, "Looks like

the "little slave" in our mansion is finally going to be useful."

Sun Jiao instantly understood as a sign of joy also flashed across her face.

"What? Reduce soil contamination? Why should I help you?" With fingers holding onto the test tube, the smooth and silky silver hair hid the disdainful expression on Lin Lin's face as she said without any consideration.

The one red and one black pupil were the same as when he left before. It seemed that she became used to having an odd creature living inside her body.

"Because you need to eat," Jiang Chen let out a sigh as he said righteously.

He was already becoming bored of looking at her humiliated expression, but this girl seemed to think otherwise?

"Do you feel great about being bullied now?" Seeing the slightly sad Lin Lin drawing on the touch board, Jiang Chen said helplessly.

With such a gorgeous face, she had to have such a terrible expression.

"Go die." With her finger finishing the last line, Lin Lin gave Jiang Chen a hard stare and popped out her tongue to give him a

scary face.

"What is this?" Jiang Chen ignored her action as he got closer to the touch board."

"Ahem, foolish-" Lin Lin straightened her back while the tip of her lips curved up.

"Ahem."

"Ahh! Enough! Fine, I'll say it." Lin Lin pouted her mouth in sadness as she touched the screen. "The first step is to neutralize the soil. The second step is to use ion membranes to permeate out the heavy metal ions, the third step is..."

"Hold on, what is an ion membrane?" Jiang Chen interrupted her as he was completely lost.

"A thing that can easily filter through the ion particles should be pretty common," Lin Lin said nonchalantly.

[What. I have never heard about this before.]

Jiang Chen suddenly recalled that Lin Lin had always stayed in the research facility, for she wouldn't be so clueless about the situation of the apocalypse otherwise. In this case, the "common" in her mind probably meant common in the lab.

[Did not think this through...]

"Let me first ask, how many steps does this process include?" Jiang Chen was feeling speechless.

"Not that many, only 24 steps. I have taken a sample of the soil here before, and the contamination level is 68. It's hard to believe in a land this toxic weeds can grow." When the topic revolved around her field of interest, Lin Lin became keener.

"Does your lab not consider costs when you experiment?" Jiang Chen ridiculed."

"Costs? Of course," Lin Lin disagreed.

"Then tell me after 24 steps, what is the cost?"

Lin Lin looked at Jiang Chen strangely.

"Are you misinterpreting something? <Project Garen of Eden> is not a soil purification project. Since it is a subproject of space colonization, then why do we need to understand how to treat the pollution on Earth. Using organics as well as minerals on other planets, we could produce soil. It is too troublesome to purify it. "

"Produce soil?"

"That's right. It is not difficult to produce soil. At least easier

than washing the ground. But since all the "finished goods" are contaminated here, it would not be easy to find raw ingredients to form clean soil." Lin Lin let out a sigh.

Produce soil? Other planets?

Jiang Chen suddenly smacked his own head as he cursed in his mind.

[F*ck, why didn't I think of this before. It is not that difficult. I can interdimensional travel! If I can carry back food, how difficult would it be to transport a couple of hundred cubic meters of soil?]

Since the problem was solved, Jiang Chen didn't plan to ask further, so he changed the topic.

"Okay, let's not talk about this... Oh, did you finish the task I gave you?"

Chapter 176: Wormhole

Since it has been a while, the Death Claw and mutated lead skin human research should be completed?

"Of course. Who do you think I am?' Lin Lin let out a sigh as a confident expression appeared on her face.

"Follow me." She crooked her finger at Jiang Chen as she turned around, swaying her silver white hair, and walked to the giant vial in the back.

A naked monster with its flesh exposed was in the middle of the vial. The dark green liquid occasionally had bubbles blowing upwards. It seemed like the work of a science freak in American comics. But Jiang Chen didn't focus on that. Rather he looked at the bottom part of the monster.

Just like the rumors say, no d*ck.

Lin Lin pointed her delicate finger and pressed the touch screen on the side of the vial. Several orange lights shined into the hologram screen in front of them. The list of data on the screen had Jiang Chen completely lost.

Lin Lin, standing beside him, looked at him contemptuously in secret. She imprudently made fun of Jang Chen's "ignorance" in her mind before speaking with her head held high.

"Muscle strength or body strength 63, bone strength 47, reflex 20, brain cell strength 9. From a human perspective, without overexerting the body's capabilities, this is the limit of the body's strength."

"Umm... Speaking of this, is this guy still considered human?" Lin Lin had her finger on her chin as she muttered to herself.

Jiang Chen glanced at her. [Is this girl still considered human?]

"The cell in the body is modified by the FEV virus. Similarly, the skin is implanted with heavy metal... The lead skin could be compared to C-type steel, and it could easily defend against standard bullets. The regeneration of the cell is ridiculously fast. Based on the data of the body's DNA, even if it lost an arm, it would be able to grow one back in a week's time. Although I never fought before, if this thing was put in the battlefield, it should be invincible right?" The pacifist Lin Lin even started to exclaim about the battle ability of this thing.

"Does it not have any weaknesses?" Jiang Chen had a troubled smile.

"Of course." Lin Lin nodded, "First because of the influence of heavy metal. Their nervous system is extremely weak. The brain cell strength is as low as 9. Also, their life is limited. Based on its DNA and regeneration calculation, their life expectancy is only 30 years. Also, if their head or heart is destroyed, they will die instantly."

It was the same as not saying anything. Which creature would still live without a brain or heart?

Jiang Chen let out a sigh.

"Looks like there is no shortcut to this. To destroy this dangerous thing we would have to depend on "Tiger". Using its pure explosive power of electromagnetic cannons to blow this thing into pieces."

"Also, can I ask a question?" Lin Lin abruptly spoke out.

"Mhmm? Go ahead."

"When I first acquired the body I was utterly astonished. What did you do to destroy every single cell in the mutated human's body?" Lin Lin looked oddly at Jiang Chen as she was clueless.

[It was time travel.] But he did not dare to tell her yet.

Jiang Chen subtly looked away as he began to come up with a vague response.

"Well, I used a special weapon that instantly ended all cell activity. Speaking of this, what do those cells look like under the microscope?"

"The cell membrane broke. Based on the way it broke, it appeared to be due to extremely low temperatures that caused the fluid in

the cell to freeze? It is peculiar... As if without preparation, it traveled through a wormhole with entropy infinitely approaching 0," Lin Lin doubtingly said, as she stared at Jiang Chen.

[Extremely low temperatures? But there was no temperature change during time travel.]

Jiang Chen slightly raised his eyebrows and didn't notice Lin Lin's look of doubt.

Seeing Jiang Chen had no reaction, Lin Lin continued.

"Passing through an area with entropy infinitely approaching 0 would have no impact on dead things, but for something alive, it would be nearly impossible for them to remain alive. But as the shortcut to intergalactic travel, passing through a wormhole is a topic that can't be avoided, as "how to travel through wormholes" had a lot of interesting hypotheses in the physics world. Among them, Doctor Klein's hypothesis had the most authority."

"Klein?" Jiang Chen felt that he had heard this name before.

"That's right. To put it in a simple analogy, mass and energy through two completely parallel tunnels cross the wormhole." As she said this, Lin Lin grabbed a pen to draw a cylinder on the whiteboard. Then she drew two parallel lines, one pass through inside the cylinder, and another pass through outside the cylinder.

"As long as you send the energy at the entrance of wormhole

through the tunnel into another dimension to the end of the wormhole and meet with the mass that passes through the wormhole there, it would avoid the part where entropy decreases in the wormhole."

"Detach the energy? Wouldn't that creature die instantly?" Jiang Chen didn't understand.

"Therefore, this is the brilliance of Doctor Klein." Lin Lin sighed. She drew t_1 and t_2 at the ends of the whiteboard and gave them a value to 0.

"Time. Based on research, within the wormhole, time, space, and all physic principles are ambiguous. To put it in simple terms, you could spin around a few times before walking to the exit, or you could instantly head for the exit when you enter the wormhole. As long as you find the "perfect route," you could decrease the time to pass through the wormhole to 0."

"I'll give you an analogy. A door frame is put in front you. You have a ball in your hand that represents your temperature. Based on the rule, when the ball passes through the doorframe, I will take it away from you. So instead, the instant you're about to cross the door frame, you throw the ball up and the ball would fly above the doorframe. Then, once you go through the doorframe, you catch the ball, and successfully passed through the door with the ball."

"I see." Jiang Chen half understandingly nodded his head.

"Therefore, how did you pass through the door?"

"I don't know. I used the bracelet..." Suddenly, Jiang Chen looked cautiously at Lin Lin and narrowed his eyes.

"You are setting me up."

"The fool wants to say it himself," the tip of Lin Lin's mouth raised in proudness as she said nonchalantly.

"You are playing with fire."

She seemed to have sensed the grimace in Jiang Chen's tone as Lin Lin sacredly moved back. The proud expression completely vanished. "I...I am only curious. I have no other intention. Al... Also, you suddenly appeared from the tent last time. I already had an idea... After seeing so much food in the base, you must be an alien right?!"

An alien?

Jiang Chen paused for a moment before he burst out laughing.

"What, what are you laughing at," Lin Lin worked up her courage and faintly protested.

"Ahem, nothing. Since you already guessed most of it, I'll tell you." Jiang Chen smiled, "I am a time traveler from the past, from

the year 2015."

Lin Lin took some time to think before she raised her pair of serene eyebrows.

"Time traveler? From the past?"

"You already said all physics principle doesn't apply in the wormhole since it could avoid the space continuum, time continuum would not be a problem too, right?" Jiang Chen shrugged.

"Based on the theory yes. Although out of the six colonization ships, three passed through the wormhole. As to the specifics of passing through the wormhole, only they would know." Lin Lin nodded, but then looked at Jiang Chen doubtfully. "I didn't know that this stingy devil could tell me this secret."

"What if I told you," Jiang Chen with a smile looked at the one black and one red pupil, "I don't plan to ever let you go."

Hearing that, Lin Lin's face instantly turned red as it was the rare time she didn't bad mouth back, but rather shifted her eyes to the side.

Jiang Chen didn't realize the other meaning in his words as he looked at the girl "forced to be obedient" pleasingly.

"Also, what about that Death Claw? Is the result out?"

When he mentioned the Death Claw, Lin Lin, rarely tense, turned serious.

"I found some odd things on the Death Claw."

...

After leaving from Lin Lin's lab, Jiang Chen fell into deep thought thinking about what she just said.

Everyone knew that the starting point of the x1 virus was to purify radiation, but because it experienced uncontrollable mutation under the radiation environment, it turned into the frightening virus.

But x2's design philosophy was rather dubious.

As the improved version of the x1 virus, x2's purification ability was increased. But the food for thought element was that the effect of infiltrating creature's nervous system was not removed, but rather strengthened. It also increased the structure of the cell, making it harder to be eliminated by the immune system.

As if it was designed to eliminate all humans along with the radiation.

The fortunate part was that because the cell's DNA structure was

too stable, it could not split through binary fission. It could only produce through the 'mother's' body. Therefore, after Jiang Chen cleared out the source in the area, the x2 virus slowly began to vanish.

"Could it be born through x1's own mutation? Since there is radiation everywhere..."

"Impossible," Lin Lin shook her head as she rejected Jiang Chen's doubt with certainty. "The Death Claw evolved to have armor, simplified its molecular chain to develop claws, and these were all part of natural selection. To survive, creatures would be forced to adapt and evolve certain traits, but not put a lock on its own life. The complicated breeding mechanism has no practical meaning for survival, and it is impossible that x2 was born through evolution."

She paused, before continuing, "The only possibility is that someone created the x2 virus. But what I don't understand is, the x1 virus data should already have been onboard with the colonization ship."

"Could it be another scientist that didn't manage to make it onto the ship created it?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows.

"I am not sure," Lin Lin shook her head, "But one point is certain, and that is the people who developed the x2 virus definitely have no good intentions."

Someone wanted the humans on the wasteland to become extinct.

But who could it be?

Mutated humans have enough of a reason, but a virus that the Death Claw couldn't even handle, could they resist it?

But if it was not the mutated human, who had the motives to do this?

Suddenly, a frightening thought popped into Jiang Chen's mind.

If wormholes could create time travel, then where did the three space colonization ships go? Did they really completely abandon this planet?

Chapter 177: Slavery

"Seatbelt check. Ready to depart." Chu Nan closed the hatch.

"Don't worry, I checked already." Jiang Chen, wearing the kinetic skeleton, pointed at his shoulder and smiled.

"This is procedure... Okay, lift off." Chu Nan opened the engine switch while signally the "apprentice" in the co-pilot position to keep an eye on the monitors on the right side.

Woohoo-!

Outside of the helicopter, high voltage static began to hum. Under the push of the furious vortex flow, the 51 helicopter began to lift off slowly.

Sitting across Jiang Chen was the gunner. The young man wearing orange protective gear felt shy with the base leader sitting across from him.

"Don't be anxious." Jiang Chen gave him a friendly smile.

"Yes!" The young man shouted out, just as he wanted to stand up to salute, he was comically pulled back by the seatbelt.

Jiang Chen laughed as he waved his hand signally there was no need. Then he focused his gaze on what was happening outside the

window.

It stopped snowing, but the snow had yet to melt.

It was the first time overseeing the entirety of Wanghai City in the sky.

A frozen world. The city at dawn shone brightly. The glittering colors seemed to have fended off the gloom of the radiation dust in the air.

If it was not for the occasional zombie, as well as the unhealthy colored smog, he could almost forget that he was in the apocalypse, and was instead in a snowy city in the Northern kingdom.

"From this view, the city is quite beautiful," Jiang Chen exclaimed while looking through the window.

"The first time is indeed powerful. But if you fly every day, you'll get used to it." Chu Nan laughed.

"Yeah?" Jiang Chen smiled as he didn't disagree.

5 Tigers, one armored vehicle carrying supplies, 30 light infantry carrying Reaper assault rifle, as well as two snipers equipped with ghost sniper rifles.

The destination was Shenxiang Town. This was Fishbone's first

attack on the mutated humans.

Jiang Chen didn't need to come but considering they needed the seven hundred captured survivors at the base. It would be best for the Fishbone leader to stand out and say something.

Also, to observe the battle from above was something he looked forward to.

"About to be in contact with radiation dust. Put on the mask," as he spoke, Chu Nan pulled the mask down over his helmet.

"Received."

Jiang Chen pressed a few buttons on the kinetic skeleton, picked up the helmet on the chair beside him, and connected the extension to the slot.

...

It snowed, but this level of coldness was as indifferent as the spring breeze to the mutated humans.

Even if they were fully exposed to the external conditions, they could still stand tall in the chilling snowstorm, ignoring the furious wind, and unleash the full firepower of the guns in their hands.

They were natural warriors. Viewing highly of themselves, they were the terminators of the old civilization.

Even if their bodies were unafraid of the cold, long winter journeys were still extremely difficult for them.

Additionally, the stronger the body, the higher the supply consumption. Since west of Zhufeng Road had been entirely blocked by the snow, it meant it was nearly impossible for vehicles to traverse across it and this fact put the already short supply line under more pressure.

There were only two options in front of the mutated humans.

One, send a team to Shenxiang Town across the Taifu river bank to establish an outpost, and then send the primary force to Wanghai City

Two, wait till next spring to invade Wanghai.

There was no possibility of the mutated humans and humans to reach a peaceful negotiation. Once they encountered each other, it would be a bloodbath. As for the decision to invade Wanghai City and engage in conflicts with the local human force, the mutated human leader was cautious. Different from the scattered survivors in Jia City, as the hotspot during the war, Wanghai City had multiple survivor camps that inherited frontier military technology before the war.

If they had to engage in conflict with the human force, the mutated human would rather have it happen during the winter.

If they waited for spring, the advantage of the mutated humans being able to fight in harsh climates would be non-existent. At the same time, hungry mutants would wake up from hibernation which would make the trip into city center more problematic.

Because of the above reasons, the mutated humans decided to go with plan one for now.

Although the highway between 7th area and Shenxiang Town was completely blocked by snow, the road condition from Shenxiang to Wanghai was relatively smooth. As long as they establish an outpost to store supplies, the pressure of the supply line would be greatly alleviated. A winter crusade would be possible.

Therefore, the captured survivors in Shengxiang Town were not immediately escorted back, but rather were forced to construct defensive structures by the mutated humans there.

Outside Shenxiang Town, the outline of the reinforced concrete wall was starting to become visible.

The sides of the road were piled with wood chips and were placed as obstacles and barriers to block the major roads outside of the town. But when the mutated humans arrived, the flimsy barrier could not bring even the slightest sense of security to the survivors hiding behind cover. The monster wielding steel carried machine

guns and the bullet storm destroyed the mental fortitude of every defender.

In the shack not far away from this place, the painted concrete wall was cut in half by the coilless cannon. On the shambles were terrifying bullet holes, and the blood stains on the wooden floor in the room were still clearly visible.

The survivors defending behind cover could not cause a single casualty to the attacking mutated humans. But when the first mutated human passed through the wooden barrier, tens of bodies were already on the ground, which forced the survivors to raise the white flag and surrender.

The recalcitrants' body was pierced by wooden spears, hung in the snow being eroded by the snowstorm, and eaten by the mutated rats. Just like a flag, declaring the cruelty of the victors.

Wang Pin, with cold eyes, stared at the frail humans as they dragged concrete and steel through the snow with difficulty, building up their outpost.

"Move quicker you damn pests. Who said you could stop, mhmm?" A horrific looking mutated human held a whip as he cursed at the slaves. His whip regularly beat at the weak figures, without any care if they actually made a mistake or not.

The frightened faces instinctively made him feel joyful.

Since he couldn't acquire pleasant sensations physiologically, the body full of male hormones could only be alleviated through primal violence.

"Luke, don't accidentally kill them. Even if they are pests, they still have value in entertaining us." Wang Pin strolled beside the supervisor as he flashed his mouth full of fangs. Looking at the boy lying in the snow, he did not hide his eyes full of disgust and disdain.

The mutated human after being "reborn" would rename themselves, abandoning the ancient ethics along with their name.

"Haha!" Luke flung the whip in his hand as he laughed. "Cowards, all eyes on me."

The people carrying bags of concrete all stopped.

Men, women, elderly, and children.

The white snow circled around them, but it could not hide their terrified looks. They could not scream, nor be angry. The chilling cold already caused their facial nerves to lose any sense of feeling. The bloodthirsty mutated humans made them forget the dignity they had.

He looked at the numb faces with satisfaction. Luke lowered his head and looked at the boy trembling in the snow. With a grimace, he lifted his foot and stepped on the youthful face.

"Ahh..."The suppressed scream came from the bottom of his foot, as the frozen fingers tightly grasped onto the ground as he crashed into the freezing snow.

The father of the boy stood on the side with his shoulders trembling. His bloodshot eyes widened at the scene.

The mutated humans on the side carried their rifles as they mockingly looked at the slaves being humiliated. The lack of entertainment meant that the thing they loved to do the most was to humiliate the helpless slaves.

FEV virus was magical. The magical part was that it would make the modified person forget any previous reluctance and experience the sensation of evolution. They would forget about their hatred towards the mutated humans and willingly join the new party, and in term shift their hatred onto the old species unwilling to accept evolution.

"No-!" A deafening scream broke the silence. A woman with messy hair leaped onto the snow as she tightly held onto the mutated human's foot while desperately trying to save the boy being stepped on.

"Mom..." The boy's eyeballs were protruding because of pressure, his mouth weakly moved.

Luke apathetically observed the woman from above. Coldly staring at the plea and despair in her eyes.

"Get out." The cold words left his mouth.

Luke lifted the foot stepping on the boy's face as he kicked her chest mercilessly and sent the woman flying.

She struggled to stand up from the snow, the edges of her mouth had blood dripping down as she coughed.

But her eyes didn't look at Luke, and instead looked at the boy freed from under his foot.

A tender smile appeared on her face as she crawled to the kid.

For some reason, the expression on the woman's face enraged Luke.

"Stop," he arrogantly ordered.

The woman ignored him as she shakingly moved her arms in the boy's direction. Seeing his mom was getting closer, the boy looked relieved.

But then, a rifle was pointed at her head.

She blankly looked at it as despair appeared on her face.

"Could, could it not be here," She used her trembling voice to plead.

The second she leaped out from the crowd, she knew her fate.

The people who dared to defy them all died, no exception.

If possible, she didn't want to die in front of her child.

Luke's face held a disdained grimace. This person wanted to discuss terms with him?

"Let her go."

A man stood out, but his legs and shoulders trembled. Luke scorned.

"I am willing to die for her." This sentence seemed to have taken all of his courage.

The woman looked at the man with eyes wide open as the sign of life began to vanish from her face.

The cracked mouth opened as a powerless voice whispered out.

"N...no-"

"Then go die." Luke immediately fired. The bullet penetrated his chest, and even hurt the elder behind him.

"Ahhh-!"

The crowd howled. The woman's scream was filled with heartbreak, and the boy's eyes opened wide as he watched his father fall into the snow.

Seeing the woman on all four scrambling to crawl to her husband, Luke's face revealed a psychotic but satisfied smile.

He lifted his gun again as he was about to execute the woman that dared to dirty his feet.

But just at that moment, Wang Pin, standing on the side, gently put his hand on the lifted rifle.

Chapter 178: The Unscientific Electromagnetic Cannon

The woman covered her husband as the body's temperature began to drop. The woman desperately tried to use her own heat to warm him, to save his fading life.

"I love you."

"No, no, I won't allow you to go." Droplets of tears rolled down the woman's cheek, splattering on the blood soaked jacket.

"Sorry..."

"I don't want your apology! I don't-!" The heartbreaking scream could not stop the body's temperature from dropping.

Luke moved his eyes away from the two as he looked confusedly at his companion. He didn't understand his intention.

"It's too boring to kill them, buddy. You haven't learned the essence of torture." Wang Pin patted his shoulder, pretending to sound wise as he cracked a smile.

"Oh?" Luke raised his eyebrows as he stuffed the gun into his lap. "Go ahead then."

Wang Pin took the gun with a grimace on his face. He ignored the

woman looking at him with anger and fear, and turned to the other pigs.

"Pigs, listen up. Now, anyone who r*pes her will be given freedom."

The crowd became unsettled, but no one came up.

Luke looked at his colleague, not understanding his intention. He didn't know what was the purpose of seeing herds of humans in intercourse.

That's right, "herds". From the mutated human's perspective, humans were only livestock. Due to traces of memory being left from before their transformation, they didn't eat human flesh like cannibals. However, they would not shy away from any cruelty to obtain a sense of joy from the howling humans.

"No one? If I remember correctly, this woman, to your standard of beauty, should be quite attractive," Wang Pin continued to hold his rifle and said slowly.

"Is there any purpose in this?" Luke was still confused.

"Of course, buddy, learn from me. Other than killing, there are a lot of other ways to dig out the despair in their hearts."

Wang Pin smiled with a grimace as he licked his dry lips. He then looked at the frightened woman backing away from him.

"Lying on top of her husband's yet to be cold body, under the watch of her son, and humiliated by countless people. What kind of despair would be on such a face? The idea is making me excited. Isn't the whole purpose of the existence of civilization to blossom the glimpse of light under the torture of the primal? Hahaha!"

The cruel laughter was deafening, shaking off the snow on trees that were a few kilometers away.

Luke blankly looked at the psychotic smile on his colleague as an excited expression appeared on his face.

"Sh*t, you are a genius. Oh, devil! You must be an artist in your previous life."

"Who knows?" Wang Pin smiled as he used his gun to point at the closest man.

"You, go fu*k her."

The man gulped, gritted his teeth, and defiantly said.

"I can't do it."

Bang-!

Like a piece of paper, he fell onto the ground. The man's face still

maintained a defiant expression, with a glimpse of disbelief.

"Next." Wang Pin pointed the gun at the next man, a middleaged man holding his bleeding arm.

Trembling, the middleaged man walked a few steps, before finally kneeling onto the ground.

"I-"

Bang-!

Wang Pin didn't give him the opportunity to explain as he immediately blew up his head.

Red and white splattered everywhere and even splashed onto the person behind him.

Wang Pin raised his chin and targeted the next person.

Perhaps terrified by the horrific scene, the third person only hesitated slightly before looking down and running to the woman with trembling steps.

"Sorry, please forgive me." The man was afraid to look at the expression on the woman's face as he merciless reached for her collar.

"N...No." The woman's eyes widen in despair.

The man ignored her struggling plea. He ignored all the morals and dignity of the human civilization and pushed her down on the body that was still slowly losing its temperature.

In his mind, he was desperately trying to comfort himself. If he didn't do it, he would die. He was doing it, but it was not his intention.

Wang Pin pleasingly looked at the man's action; the joy of ripping the civilization apart was almost making him shake in excitement. Luke, standing on the side, also had his eyes wide open. He was only a mutated human for less than two years, and it was the first time he witnessed such a joyful moment other than from violence.

Wang Pin raised his gun again, pointing at the next person. Just as he was about to speak, he heard the shout of the patrol.

"What is that?!" The mutated human carrying an assault rifle pointed at the black dot in the sky.

He raised his eyebrows as Wang Pin looked up, "What is-"

Boom!

Mixed with thick smoke, the snow on the ground blew up like an avalanche as it flew over the crowd.

The shockwave flipped people onto the ground as the frightened crowd ditched the concrete and steel bags in their hands. They ran to the nearest barrier or ducked into the field.

The mutated humans didn't stop them because their situation was not any better.

"Dammit, what is it!"

Wang Pin crawled up from the ground as he looked at the thick smoke ten meters away with horrid.

The bloodthirsty pupils contracted as a rare sense of fear surfaced.

....

"Direct hit."

"Beautiful!" Jiang Chen smiled as he gave a thumbs up to the gunner.

The furious wind blew through the hatch door as the orange protective suit gusted in the chill. The gunner wearing his mask turned and nodded his head to express his gratitude towards Jiang Chen's praise. Then, without stopping, he carried another 10kg bomb and stuffed it into the cartridge as the cannon began to

charge.

At this moment, Jiang Chen had a tablet in his hand. The flashing picture on the screen was of the entire battlefield. The camera located below the helicopter holistically presented the overview of the battlefield to the commander.

The green dot hidden three kilometers away from the town was Fishbone's light infantry. The five tigers were scattered behind buildings, only exposing the electromagnetic cannon. The vehicle was also covered with white cloth, which camouflaged the vehicle perfectly with the snow. This only left the pitch black cannon visible.

The red dot signaled were enemy units marked out by the sniper, while the gray dots were civilians.

The thick smoke rising from the ground was the truck destroyed by the helicopter cannon. The anti-air machine gun had yet to unleash its power before being blown up into metal shards.

The mutated humans who lost their air defense began to flee.

Jiang Chen observed the battlefield.

It was like playing a game.

Also worth mentioning, the command system attached to the helicopter was the masterpiece of Yao Yao.

"The purpose of civilization is to punish the primal brutality."

As if it was meant to rebuttal the clamor, Jiang Chen mustered to himself.

[Since the grim reaper has already arrived on the battlefield, then you bastards must go die.]

He coldly overwatched the fleeing figures on the screen as his finger pointed at the red dot on the screen.

Woosh-!

The trident shaped cannon began to flash a faint blue electric light, followed by a screeching homing noise.

The orange arc smashed to the ground. The noise of the bomb breaking the sound barrier almost covered the screaming Northern wind.

Chapter 179: Smite

The orange arc explosion penetrated the cloud shaped sound barrier.

Followed by the explosive homing, the cylinder shaped bomb rapidly spun, just like god smiting the sins in the world, it smashed directly into the fleeing mutated humans.

Boom!

Snow knee deep blew up into the air and mixed with shattered soft lead debris as it rained down onto the surrounding area.

Without the need for explosives and just using pure mechanical power, the 10kg bomb blew up in the enemies' base.

Soft lead made bombs allowed the bomb to break into thumb sized pieces and scatter under the heavy air pressure. This instantly blew the mutated humans nearby away like paper. The concrete wall nearby completely collapsed. The debris ten meters away even left bowl sized holes on the wall.

"F*ck, what is that damn thing!" Wang Pin struggled to stand up from the snow. He lifted his blood filled face and frightenedly stared at the black dot in the sky.

Luke was already dead. He saw the head meters away from the body. The poor guy had his neck blow off by debris as his entire

head was severed from his body.

"It's a helicopter! Dammit, why would Liuding Town's people be here?!" The mutated human hiding behind the barrier raised his binoculars as he said with a trembling voice.

Liuding?!

When he heard the word, Wang Pin instant felt a chill overwhelm his body. His limbs felt cold. Without hesitation, he got up and ran for his life to the concrete-made barrier.

Based on rumors, on the wasteland near Wanghai, only humans on the aircraft carrier inherited flight units before the war.

But why would they show up here while they were located hundreds of kilometers away?

Boom!

The deafening blast ended his thought as the snow and debris covered him.

The bomb didn't just come from the sky. It also came from the horizon.

As if it was an agreement, five arcs smashed into the mutated human base like iron fists. The half completed reinforced concrete

wall was instantly shattered into pieces. As the pieces of concrete flew backward, the mutated humans taking cover behind it all dropped to the ground. The ones yet to be killed crawled into the town.

Although the electromagnetic cannon used 5kg bombs, it was not inferior compared to the strike from the dome.

"God, please stop!" Crawling into the corner of a room and covering his head, a mutated human roared with a whimpering voice. The rifle along with his arrogance were all thrown into the snow.

"D*mmit, where is the anti-air cannon! We-"

Under the far fire range, the mutated human's machine guns were like toys. The only purpose of their shouting was to unleash the fear in their hearts. The occasion bomb that flew to Fishbone base's side smashed into the building used as cover without any accuracy.

However, on the Fishbone side, with the guidance of snipers as well as aerial coverage, the five tiger fired simultaneously and accurately, eliminating the mutated human's firepower and shattering their morale.

"Someone seems to be using rifles to shoot at us." Jiang Chen looked at the screen and smiled. His finger lightly drew on the screen as he circled a few red dots.

Debris flew up as the red dots were blown up to pieces by the bombs.

"Only that anti-air machine gun is a bit threatening. Even if the assault rifle bullets could hit this far, the airflow would make it lose its accuracy." Chu Nan laughed, initiated automatic hovering, and moved his hands away from the controls.

"Oh?" Jiang Chen answered absentmindedly, his eyes were focused on the red dots on the screen. He then pressed his finger on the guy covering his head and ducking into the snow.

Although those monstrous humans did not deserve mercy, the apathetic feeling of killing people through a screen still shocked him.

Oh right, correction. They were not human.

"Speaking of something else, how's that wife of yours?" Jiang Chen dragged his finger on the green dots and pointed on the location of the road. After receiving the command, 20 something light infantries began to move to the target location. He then pointed a few more times on the screen, and the other 20 light infantries crossed the barriers, pushing forward to the target area through the front.

"Not bad," Chu Nan answered concisely as he didn't seem to want to continue on the topic.

"Oh..." Even if he accepted, his heart must not feel so great.

Jiang Chen didn't ask further.

Over half of the mutated humans stationed in Shenxiang Town were eliminated. The remaining ones were under the heavy fire suppression of the electromagnetic cannon. The steel plate in front of their chests could block bullets, but when the bullets changed to electromagnetic cannons, it was as good as paper.

While maintaining fire suppression, the two squads of light infantry quickly captured the mutated humans hiding in the barriers. As to the mutated human still reluctant to give up, merciless canons awaited them.

Beep!

A screeching alarm began to sound.

"What's that noise?" Jiang Chen frowned.

"What else could it be. RPG "Flying Sword" anti-air missile. The mutated humans probably dug it up from a PAC armory," Chu Nan said casually as he simultaneously pressed a button beside the control panel.

Click.

Within the vision of the tablet, a few flashing sparks began to fall. The approaching anti-air missile directly hit one of the rubbles and scathed by the helicopter.

"Electromagnetic lure. These things that chase after high-frequency electronic devices are easy to deal with. The anti air machine gun is more reliable." Chu Nan laughed contemptuously as he put his hands behind his head and sank further into the chair.

...

Jiang Chen pointed his finger at the guy reloading the RPG, but Jiang Chen didn't use electromagnetic cannons this time. Instead, he commanded the infantry to attack him.

He was very interested in the anti-air missile.

If he could seize it, why would he destroy it?

...

Cheng Weiguo leaned tightly against the cover as he checked the coordinates on the EP. Then he signaled the team on the other side to throw a smoke bomb as they quickly pushed further into the town.

An unfair battle.

With the firepower advantage, the mutated human's muscles and their strength in numbers were not worth mentioning.

They already crossed their defensive structure. At this point, his force still maintained zero casualties.

Pointing the rifle out of cover, Cheng Weiguo aimed at the mutated human, with half of his body exposed carrying the RPG, and pulled the trigger.

Tata-!

The bullets instantly forced the mutated human to take cover and shredded more of the already in shambles concrete wall into pieces.

The soldiers on the other wing quickly rushed in, just like how they were trained in exercise.

The gunshots afar began to disappear. The force attacking from the side already controlled the south area of the town. The battle in the east should also be over.

Cheng Weiguo tugged at the thick scarf around his neck. His beard covered with ice shards, he breathed out a few white puffs.

"Team A attack the town center and control the warehouse.

Team B follow the boundary to clear out the area. Team C take control of the captives. Move!"

"Yes, Sir!" The synched roar echoed within the communication channel.

Cheng Weiguo put the rifle on his arm, looked up at the black dot in the sky, and he saluted.

But at this time, the snow beside him suddenly moved as he immediately pointed the gun at the pile.

He maintained shooting position as he slowly moved to cover, using his feet to remove the snow.

It was a face.

The boy feebly looked at him with a bruise printed on his face.

Seeing this, Cheng Weiguo quickly kneeled down, used the handle of the gun to sweep the snow off of him, and dragged him out from the snow.

"Sa...Save my mom..."

Looking at the boy's face, the feeling of yet to extinct justice made him feel enraged.

"Where is she?" He held onto the boy's hand and said firmly.

"There..." The boy faintly pointed at the pile of snow on the side.

Cheng Weiguo put him on a concrete bag as he carried the gun and traversed through the snow to the pile.

He dug through the snow and found a man. He was slightly shocked, but soon saw the woman below the man.

The woman's body was exposed, her hair messy. Her breathing was faint as if she could lose her life at any second.

The man on top of her already lost his breath. The soft lead debris penetrated his body. The shattered glasses was covered in blood.

At the moment, Cheng Weiguo didn't understand the relationship between them, especially when he saw that there was another man under her.

Regardless, saving her life was more important.

He dragged the already dead man out of the snow. Cheng Weiguo then helped the sandwiched woman up.

"It's all over. Your son is beside you."

But in an instant, the woman's eyes became widened as she stared at something behind him.

Suddenly alerted, Cheng Weiguo hugged the woman and rolled onto the ground.

Dong-!

A steel beam pierced the location he previous stood in as it deeply penetrated into the concrete bag.

The blood covered Wang Pin stared at Cheng Weiguo in rage as he leaped towards him roaring.

Without hesitation, he raised his gun, and the rifle unleashed its power on the mutated human's chest as blood began to splatter. But the mutated human did not back down as he took the bullets and pushed Cheng Weiguo onto the ground.

"Roar-!" The mutated human clenched onto the reaper assault rifle, attempting to take it from Cheng Weiguo's hands.

Cheng Weiguo tightly clenched his teeth, his face entirely red. Obviously, he was no match for the mutated human's strength as the gun began to move in the mutated human's direction.

Seeing he could not outmatch the mutated human's strength, he immediately let go.

Because of the sudden jerk, Wang Pin's body immediately tilted up with the rifle, Grasping onto the opportunity, Cheng Weiguo swiftly grabbed the dagger on his leg and swung it at Wang Pin's throat.

The dagger flashed through as blood began to splash all over the ground.

Wang Pin dropped the rifle onto the ground as he covered his throat, pouring out blood. His mouth was open, but he couldn't say a word. He could only use the blood and his widened eyes to show his disbelief and bitterness.

Grabbing the rifle on the ground, Cheng Weiguo, without hesitation, pressed the gun to his forehead and pulled the trigger.

There was more blood.

Wang Pin's shoulder loosened as he fell backward, deep into the thick snow.

At the same time, the woman's shoulder began to loosen up too.

[Alive...]

Kneeled on the ground, she leaned her face against the snow pile beside her. She couldn't feel the coldness on her face anymore...

Chapter 180: Colony

The battle ended swiftly, completely in contrast with the stalemate they were in when they encountered the mutated humans last time.

The 30 infantries, who entered the town, did not suffer any casualties, and only one unlucky guy was shot in the leg by a recalcitrant mutated human. The bullet happened to pass through his artery. Although the blood gushing out was quite frightening, the combat medic was quick to rescue, and the man was no longer in a life-threatening condition.

A total of 35 mutated humans were killed including 29 who died from electromagnetic pulse cannon and six of which died from of assault rifle and sniper attacks. Five were captured, and although mutated humans would rarely take the humiliation of being captured by a human lying down, under that overwhelming firepower, instinctive fear prevailed over the ridiculous pride.

A total of 721 human captives were rescued. If the bodies outside the town were all dead, the population of the town should be 779 before the mutated humans came.

There were bullet holes the size of a bowl throughout the exterior buildings outside of the town, and collapsed concrete buildings could be seen everywhere. Half of which were destroyed by the mutated humans.

The Fishbone Base infantry maintained the order of the queue as

they recorded all the rescued townspeople and then provide them with the nutrient supply that originally belonged to them.

The five Tigers didn't drive into the city but stopped at the bridgehead of Zhufeng highway. A few soldiers were carrying concrete bags to build five crude bunkers.

This move was very intriguing.

All the Shenxiang townspeople had one thought hovering in their mind: do these people want to stay here?

They had a sense of foreboding.

...

Type-51 helicopter landed about a half kilometer away from the town in an open space. Jiang Chen, clad in kinetic skeletons, jumped down from the top. Cheng Weiguo, along with the mayor of the town, greeted Jiang Chen and saluted after seeing him.

"Did you finish the census?" Jiang Chen cut to the chase.

"It's done." Cheng Weiguo handed a tablet to Jiang Chen for him to check.

Jiang Chen swiped the screen while he perused the statistics.

Population: 721, captive mutated humans: 5.

Seized: 24 machine guns, 72 various models of rifles, 100 thousand rounds of bullets, 1 shoulder-launched missile, 5 surface-to-air missiles, 5 recoilless cannons, and 40 rounds of ammunition. And there were 40 sets of C-type steel armors, though most of them were destroyed in the explosion.

Looking at these batches of firearms, Jiang Chen was secretly stunned.

Oh boy, these firearms reserves could catch up with the entire assets of the Fishbone Base!

It could be seen that these mutated humans invested a lot in this outpost, but now all of these belonged to Jiang Chen.

These firearms would remain here, but he ordered the armors to be shipped back. Although these lumps of irons were of little value to humans, nevertheless it's still pretty good to reforge them. Fishbone Base could use more C-type steels. With about ten tons of steel, however, modifying them into two armored vehicles wouldn't be a problem.

In addition, there were also hundreds of preserved mutants cadavers which appeared to be the food of mutated humans, since only they could eat something this toxic. However, so as not to waste anything, Jiang Chen still ordered Cheng Weiguo to throw these into the organic extractor to produce some nutrient supplies. With the ratio of one mutant to 100 nutrient supplies, it could

easily extract 10,000 nutrient supplies.

Including the 30,000 in the storage, he temporarily did not have to worry about the rations of more than 700 people.

What excited him most was the construction materials that he seized. The mutated humans left a huge amount of cement and steels in the warehouse which were originally used to build an outpost, but right now, they were in his hands.

With these batches of prefabricated construction materials, Jiang Chen could easily stretch out reinforced concrete defensive line along the shore.

He returned the tablet to Cheng Weiguo, said a few words, and the latter received the order at once and left.

Then Jiang Chen finally turned to look at the mayor, who had been standing there and smiled amiably at him.

Seeing that Jiang Chen was looking at him, the mayor quickly bowed, "The honorable Fishbone Base leader, Mr. Jiang Chen, on behalf of all the survivors in Shenxiang town, I would like to express our utmost gratitude and sincerity to you."

"Don't worry about it...Do tell, what's your name?"

"Deng Bin."

"Okay, Mr. Deng Bin, I want to go to the town hall now. Do you have time to take me there?"

"My pleasure." Deng Bin bowed again.

To be honest, as the mayor, their "savior's" behavior after eliminating the mutated humans made him very uneasy. At the moment, however, they were wielding guns, and the entire military power of the town was wiped out after the onslaught of mutated humans. Not possessing confidence nor knowing what to say, he could only meekly follow Jiang Chen on the side.

With hands in his pocket, Jiang Chen looked at the surrounding buildings while walking on the road leading to the town hall.

The reek of blood lingered in the nose and did not fade away even after a long time.

Along the way, he didn't say anything which actually made Deng Bin somewhat uncertain.

After hesitating for a moment, Deng Bin looked at Jiang Chen and asked tentatively, "In just three days, they already slaughtered more than 60 of us. Truly grateful to you—us survivors from Qingpu. If there is anything we can help you with, we'll do our absolute best."

"I've already said not to worry about it," Jiang Chen, however,

didn't directly answer. Instead, he only responded in a brief sentence before no longer speaking.

While Deng Bin's heart was still apprehensive, the two had arrived in front of the town hall.

To his surprise, the leader of the mysterious organization didn't seem to have the intention to go in; rather, he just stood in front of the town hall.

Did it deserve to be called a government building? It was aesthetically built, and based on the damage, it could be considered the only intact building in the entire town.

"Say, was there a person called Lin Chaoen who came to your place before?"

Deng Bin was a bit stunned for a moment, as he didn't expect Jiang Chen would suddenly ask this irrelevant question.

Frowning, he tried to recall carefully and answered, "There seems to be someone like that...he came from Jia City."

"Did he not say anything to you? Like how the mutated humans would be here?" Jiang Chen asked casually.

Looking blankly at Jiang Chen, Deng Binyao shook his head and said, "No, he only stayed in our town for a night before leaving hastily."

Hadn't said anything?

[That's extremely odd. If they desperately wanted to prevent the mutated humans from invading Wanghai City, there is no reason not to alert the people here, so that they can make early preparations. Or at the very least, build some defensive structures.]

Jiang Chen slightly knitted his brows as he carefully scrutinized Deng Bin's eyes.

[It doesn't seem like he's pretending at all.]

"How did you remember him...what I mean is, is there anything special about him that made you take a closer look at him?"

"Hehe, there was one. Because the people passing through Zhufeng highway were usually lone travelers from Jia Cty, they come here to dig a few components or microchips from military equipment. These things would sell well anywhere in the mainland. The worst-case scenario is that they would go to Liuding town to buy a few boxes of canned fish to sell when they returned, and then the price could at least double. However, only Lin Chaoen came back empty-handed."

"Has he only been here once?"

"Yes, he seemed to have taken another route when he went to Wanghai City."

Nodding thoughtfully, Jiang Chen became lost in thought.

Deng Bin, standing on the side, was trying to figure out the expression on Jiang Chen's face but couldn't manage to read the slightest useful information. He couldn't understand why Jiang Chen would suddenly ask about the lone travelers. Was there any deeper meaning in this?

While he was speculating, Jiang Chen spoke again, but this time it was to ask a different question.

"Let's talk about something else. What do you do to earn a living?"

More than 700 people were not a small number. It's not the city center, so there were not enough zombies to provide organic matter that could be used to extract nutrient supply. Although there were quite a number of mutants here, they were usually powerful. If they ever hunted mutants, they didn't exactly look like a well-equipped group of survivors.

"We planted some crops on the farms outside the town to extract nutrient supplies," Deng Bin looked at Jiang Chen in the eyes and said cautiously.

The fruit of the mutant plants could not be eaten, but it could be used as an excellent raw material for the extraction of nutrient supplies. Many survivors in Qingpu would also plant such crops on the roof and go to the Sixth Street to exchange for crystals or

nutrient supplies.

"Oh? What is the degree of soil contamination here? What about the radiation?"

Seeing that Jiang Chen seem to be showing no interest in the nutrient supply in the warehouse, Deng Bin felt slightly relieved and muttered, "It seems to be 9...and 20."

With regards to this, he didn't have to lie about it. The two numbers were easy to measure. The radiation value could be measured by EP, and the soil contamination would only require to take a sample and then to drop two drops of reagent.

"9? Very good!" Jiang Chen suddenly laughed and then reached out and patted Deng Bin on the shoulder, "From this day onwards, you'll be in charge of the farm."

Deng Bin paused while looking completely dumbfounded. He couldn't understand the meaning behind his words.

"Farm? Me?"

Jiang Chen smiled, looked at him and said, "That's right, who else would it be?"

Swallowing his saliva, Deng Bin was still bewildered and asked, "If you want those mutated fruits, we are willing to pay tribute to you—"

Those things were not worth money at all, and not to mention the price of organic matter was declining. Even with the price two months ago, one ton of fruit could only extract 100 nutrient supplies which could be exchanged for ten crystals. The reaper rifle alone in their hands was worth 20. Thus, they didn't need to care about this small profit.

Jiang Chen raised his hand to interrupt him.

"You misunderstood me, we don't care about those rotten fruits that you planted."

It was the truth, Fishbone Base didn't need nutrient supply.

"Then you mean—"

"Am I still not direct enough? Former mayor, I need you to take care of my farm for me." There were two words Jiang Chen emphasized and they were "former mayor" and "my".

Upon hearing this, Deng Bin's face instantly paled, his eyes widened, "You, you want to occupy our homes, you can't do—"

"But we can, the mutated humans are going to cross this river, and I will prevent that from happening, and so we're here."

"But all of them are dead now..." Deng Bin had difficulty

speaking.

Jiang Chen looked strangely at Deng Bin, he smiled and said: "Are we having a misunderstanding here? You think we are here on a special trip to rescue you? I am sorry to tell you, but we are only fighting against the mutated humans. And this place is only the outpost I captured from them. Moreover, in accordance with the rules of the wasteland, since I saved you, you are all my captives."

Deng Bin's lips trembled and couldn't utter a single word. His previous thought was they were saved, but in the end, it was just a change of ownership.

Seeing that he had no reaction, Jiang Chen could also not care any less.

"They will be back. Furthermore, there would be more of them, but I will defend here."

Stamping his foot, he pointed towards the ground beneath his foot.

"And from now on, this is my colony."

Chapter 181: As firm as the pyramid

The next morning, Fishbone's flag was raised at the town hall of Shenxiang Town, proclaiming that it had officially become part of the territory of Fishbone Base.

Under the supervision of 20 riflemen, more than 200 survivors carrying cement bags and steel bars arrived at Taipu River. They would be under the leadership of 20 engineers that Fishbone dispatched to establish defense facilities on the riverside.

Although they were still being forced to engage in manual labor, Jiang Chen's treatment of them was far better than the mutated humans. Not only did he distribute winter clothes bought from the Sixth Street, but he also didn't use whip in order to force them to work harder. As long as they were not slacking off, they would not be punished for failing to finish the project on time.

During his encounter with Shenxiang Town, Jiang Chen used a completely different strategy compared to winning over the group of survivors in Qingpu area.

As a result of being situated outside of the city where the population density was extremely low, the zombies in town were obliterated. After more than ten years of hard work, the town was finally cleared of zombies. It can be said that they lived in comfort these past years compared to those struggling survivors in the metropolis. Thus, their combat ability was also much weaker, and the difficulty of enlisting them was also naturally lesser.

For instance, the survivors in Shenxiang town were all hoes-wielding farmers, while the survivors of Qingpu were gun-wielding hunters. For the nomadic "hunters", Jiang Chen adopted a strategy of trading, enticing, and then assimilating. For these "farmers", however, he adopted a straightforward approach in assimilating them in his military force.

All the survivors implanted with slavery microchips were directly promoted to the management position, and the construction of infrastructure was handed over to more than 700 newly joined members. So far, this was how the pyramid's governing structure was established. Jiang Chen merely needed to keep a firm grip on the people on the top layer of the pyramid, and there would naturally be people under him who would take charge on his behalf for the matters in the bottom layer.

In order to supervise the construction of the defensive structure, Liu Huasheng personally took along a team to take over the construction.

The 200 survivors were split into 20 team, with each team being led by one engineer dispatched from Fishbone Base as they worked round the clock to construct the defensive structure.

On the other side, on Shenxiang Town's eastern part of the wilderness, more than 200 survivors were struggling to develop the barren land.

Here, one had to admire Jiang Chen's foresight to feed the survivors in his own base with "green food". Regardless whether or not it was done out of consideration, it was only now it was

showing its merit. If someone consumed this type of thick nutrient supply, one would urinate more frequently, but it would definitely be a long time before one would feel the need to defecate.

The survivors, who were busy clearing out the barren lands, were stunned when they saw a vehicle full of dried manure being pulled into the hill on the side of the farm.

The mutated crops consumed a high amount of nutrients from the soil, and the fertilizer made out of mutants or zombies would increase the contamination of the soil (toxicity). Thus, they would naturally consider human waste as an option. They usually had to purchase industrial fertilizer from Sixth Street to supplement the fertility of the soil.

How valuable was this waste?

At first, Jiang Chen hadn't given it much thought but instead felt the impact of this on health was quite significant. It was not until the survivors of Qingpu offered a contract to clean their base that he began to notice the problem.

In this wasteland, human waste seemed to be extremely valuable too?

Wanghai City was located in the plains, where mineral deposits were extremely scarce in the surrounding area. Although nitrogen could be obtained through artificial nitrogen fixation technology and potassium could also be extracted from seawater, phosphorus scarcity was much harder to resolve. The cost of extracting

phosphorus from a mutant organism or plant was not exactly low, and the main cost of producing fertilizer in the Sixth Street was higher than this phosphorus.

Excrement, however, was quite easy to handle. Its nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium contents were very rich and only needed to be mixed into the soil and then sprinkle the seeds.

Under Jiang Chen's direction, the farm's plot expanded from hundred acres to thousands of acres. If all of it was used to grow Carm tree, it was estimated that it could provide 100 tons of Carm resin per month. In this case, not only would it meet the industrial needs of Fishbone Base, it could also be exported to the Sixth Street. Based on the prevailing price of 150 crystals per ton, the farm would bring Fishbone Base a revenue of 10,000 crystals per month.

As for the ration of more than 700 people, provided there were 30 days in a month, two nutrient supplies per day, and if one dose of nutrient cost 0.1 crystal, it would only amount to more than 4,000 crystals.

As for those "expensive" provisions, after taking Sun Jiao's advice into consideration, Jiang Chen decided not supply them to the newly joined survivors for the time being. As for the reason, it was not because he was stingy, but rather it was to reinforce social class structure.

Unlike those survivors that were already implanted with microchips and sold themselves to Jiang Chen, if these precious rations were given too casually, it wouldn't make these

"foreigners" feel grateful. On the contrary, it's likely that they would come to feel that it was too easy, and this might even give birth to disloyalty.

When all was said and done, this was the first time they assimilated more than 700 foreign population which was practically more than three times the population of Fishbone Base, and these 700 people also belonged to the same group. If you just want to enslave them to do manual labor, one just needed to fetter their hands and feet with fetters and handcuffs. However, if you want to "digest" them, you must split them apart first.

The specifics of implementation were also quite simple.

700 people, first split them into two; first half would remain here, while the rest would be brought back to the Fishbone Base. Those who were brought back would join the factory to engage in manufacturing or enter the new military camp to receive training.

At the same time, Jiang Chen announced that every one of them was a slave, and only two nutrients mixtures could be obtained every day.

But if someone performed outstandingly in their work, his identity would be upgraded to that of a low-class citizen, and daily ration would be upgraded to two nutrient mixtures, plus a piece of bread.

If you work harder and got upgraded to a middle-class citizen, the ration would turn into two nutrient mixtures, in addition to a pack

of instant noodles.

If they became a high-class citizen, they would be able to enjoy unlimited rations just like those people implanted with microchips and would be allowed to participate in the "communal feeding" in the dining hall. Apart from not being able to join management position, they also enjoyed civil rights that were no different from those who were implanted with chips.

Once a disparity in status appeared in their small social circle, they would automatically split apart. Those who got promoted would protect their own interests and naturally stand on Jiang Chen's side in order to strive further for a higher promotion.

If they had the opportunity to climb up, most people would still choose to be content with what they have.

In addition to this, in order to distinguish ranks, all survivors implanted with chips would be conferred with a "Knight Emblem" as a means to encourage their contribution to the construction of Fishbone Base. Moreover, the "slavery chip" was officially renamed to "honorary chip". Despite being the same thing and only the name had changed, Jiang Chen could clearly sense the distinctive difference in the posture of those survivors who got promoted to knights after he promulgated his decision.

.....

The sense of honor, if used correctly, would be much more useful than those chips.

Of course, only under the premise that everyone could fill their belly would someone be able to pursue that illusory honor.

Chapter 182: Birthday

As for those emblems, those were "copy military goods" that Jiang Chen ordered from wholesale online shopping back from the modern world. The gold-plated appearance looked delicate, workmanship was also fine, and other than the lack of necessary certificates, it was no different than the real ones.

Regardless whether it was male or female, both could be honored.

On these more than 200 knights, Jiang Chen spent three days of effort to complete the "knighting" process.

If high-class citizens wanted to become part of the knight society and enter management, they must have an even more outstanding contribution. For example, meritorious military service or a breakthrough in the technological field, and so on.

After going through a busy schedule, the might of pyramid was at long last completed.

The production and life in the base returned to the right track, and after the introduction of fresh blood, there was more liveliness in the base.

...

Ten days had passed and the colony became stable.

Jiang Chen sent Zhao Gang to be in charge of the colony's defense and moved Cheng Weiguo back to handle the training of the new recruits. The five Tigers and 30 riflemen were left there, and -51 served as a gunship and was transported back.

In the same way, Jiang Chen transferred more than 100 newly produced units of hummingbird drones. He also sent some technicians to establish a relay station to control the drones in the local area. These kinds of low-altitude Unmanned Aerial Vehicles have a surprisingly effective scouting and attacking ability. With this batch of drones, it undoubtedly alleviated Fishbone Base's issue of insufficient strength significantly.

The production line of the kinetic skeleton under the leadership of Jiang Lin was also completed. For this, Jiang Chen specifically ordered the construction team to build a factory in the newly developed area that could accommodate hundreds of people. Based on Jiang Lin's estimate, provided that there were sufficient raw materials to go around, 30 kinetic skeletons monthly production could reach 30 units.

After handling everything properly, Jiang Chen suddenly found himself free.

You couldn't help but praise the talent of the Fishbone Base, which practically comprised of almost every trade in the industry. There were some things that he only needed to set the general direction, and his subordinates would already think of the execution plan for him.

"By the way, is it almost Yao Yao's birthday?"

While they were eating, Jiang Chen suddenly asked aloud.

He remembered Yao Yao had told him last time that her birthday was in November. It's already mid-November, and he got so busy in the past that he almost forgot.

"Eh? Uh..." Yao Yao face instantly turned red. She lowered her head, feeling shy, and said coyly, "Umm, its...it's not a big deal. If big brother is too busy, then it's okay if we put it off for a while."

"That's not okay, there is no meaning if the birthday is not on that day!" Jiang Chen said without hesitation as he took a huge bite out of the roasted golden chicken leg.

"Eh? O-okay. It's on November 16, hehe..." Yao Yao charmingly smiled while staring blankly at the bowl of egg soup in her bowl, gently poking the soft pudding with her spoon unconsciously.

November 16, so it's the day after tomorrow?

"What present does Yao Yao want?" Jiang Chen rubbed Yao Yao's head as he smiled.

Hearing about the present, Lin Lin, who was sitting across Jiang Chen, perked her ears and immediately shifted her attention away from her bowl of food, and raised her hand to interrupt.

"For your information, my birthday is on May 27, and I want a Hadron Collider—"

"In your dreams." Jiang Chen glared at her.

"Woo—" Lin Lin puffed her cheeks as though throwing a tantrum, the pale and gorgeous face was bloated to a dark, red color.

But contrary to Jiang Chen's expectation, she held her tongue this time.

[She finally remembers how to act when freeloading?] Jiang Chen ridiculed in his mind.

"Hmm, you have a birthday, that's wonderful." A rare sight where Sun Jiao, who never spoke during meals, looked up, her mouth was drawn into a grimace while looking outside.

This feminine appearance was not typical of this bold girl that Jiang Chen couldn't help but give her a few more looks.

"Eh? Sister Sun Jiao doesn't know your own birthday?" Yao Yao looked at Sun Jiao with a hint of sympathy.

From Yao Yao's perspective, your birthday should be the happiest day of the year. Before the war, whenever it was her birthday,

mother and father would treat her like a princess, and took her to eat lots of yummy food...

Thinking of her parents, Yao Yao's eyes could not help but flash a touch of sadness. But when she saw "Big Brother" sitting beside her, a gentle and pure love appeared in her eyes, her tiny hand softly covered the hand on top of her head.

"Who would remember that kind of thing?" Muttering, Sun Jiao pursed his lips and stared at the hand on top of Yao Yao's head with jealousy.

But she didn't say anything. Compared to her initial possessiveness, she was starting to learn how to share.

This decision was not due to her magnanimity but because when the last time that Jiang Chen came back, she faintly read a trace of fatigue from his eyes.

When she tried putting herself in his shoes—if she could live in a peaceful environment and become a wealthy girl in a mansion, would she want to come back the world full of chaos?

She had already thought of sharing him with Yao Yao for quite some time, but she had not been able to put the idea into motion.

Perhaps it was time to push this little girl a bit?

With both hands against her chin, she mischievously looked at

Lin Lin, who was sitting next to her.

To be fair, this girl was also gorgeous. Though she was but a digitalized human, but as a sex robot...

As though seemingly aware of Sun Jiao's gaze, Lin Lin blankly raised her head, but when she made eye contact with her, she involuntarily shuddered.

This female devil must be thinking of something evil!

Lin Lin quickly came to a conclusion, as she subconsciously went into "self-protection" mode, fiercely glaring at Sun Jiao. Her threatening look appeared to be saying: Stop looking at me!

However, using deterrent skills against Miss Sun Jiao was undoubtedly a foolish choice, as Sun Jiao just raised her brows and bluntly stared back.

The arrogant eyes seemed to say: I'm looking at you, so what are you going to do?

Like a startled rabbit, Lin Lin quickly lowered her head as she pouted, feeling wronged.

"Um, I won't celebrate my birthday either. If it's just me, it would feel too devious..." After listening to Sun Jiao, Yao Yao sensibly spoke in a quiet voice.

Sun Jiao was stunned, a gentle smile appeared on her face, "It's okay, you helped this bad guy so much, it's time for him to treat you. Don't worry about it. If he dared to bully you, sister will step up for you!"

With that, Sun Jiao even threateningly waved her lovely, little fist.

Seeing this, Jiang Chen couldn't help but laugh.

What else could make men more excited than a harmonious "harem"?

Although this harem's current size was only one and a half...

"Any, any request?" Yao Yao flushed as she asked faintly.

"Mhmm," Jiang Chen nodded earnestly, rubbing her fluffy hair, "As long as it's something within my means, I'll do it."

"Um....woo, I'll keep it a secret for now." Yao Yao said shyly, her head was lowered, feeling conflicted.

[Which person can keep the gift she receives confidential?]

Jiang Chen's face showed a dumbfounded expression.

"Uh, you should at least give me some time to prepare, it would be too late on the day of your birthday."

"Prepare...right," Yao Yao gently bite her lip as she looked up courageously. With eyes filled with anticipation, she looked at Jiang Chen, "Can, can you lend me a day?"

"Lend? If there is something you really want, why don't I just give it to you?" Jiang Chen asked uncertainly.

"Umm, although this is a very tempting proposal, sister Sun Jiao would definitely be unhappy, so I'll just borrow you for a day..." She stole a glance at Sun Jiao as Yao Yao said softly.

"What, am I such a stingy person?" Sun Jiao said with dissatisfaction.

"No, that's not what it is, it's just that—" Yao Yao anxiously waved her hands, and then lowered her head shyly, "I want to borrow...um! In short, just accompany me for a day, is that okay?"

[Is that it?] Jiang Chen couldn't help but facepalm.

"Of course. That's it?"

"It's an entire day! You're not busy, right?" Yao Yao asked quietly.

"An entire day? Does that include the night?" Sun Jiao was stunned.

"Ahem—" Lin Lin suddenly choked on her food. She quickly covered her mouth and reached for the bowl of soup.

Yao Yao's face flushed like her blood was about to drip out. Oddly, she didn't rush to offer an explanation, she stared at her knees instead, swinging her pair of smooth and white porcelain-like legs.

Jiang Chen was also stunned, he awkwardly scratched his cheek.

As soon as these words came out, the atmosphere on the dining table suddenly became "tense".

"Ahem, I think, considering your age, some things are just too exciting for Yao Yao, so I think the night should be left to me." Sun Jiao carefully shifted her gaze.

"I, I am not young anymore." It was rather rare for Yao Yao not to retreat, but she mustered her courage and retorted, "I'm already three years over 30!"

Upon hearing this, Sun Jiao couldn't help but feel shame. She was definitely not backing down just because she exposed her age.

"But you spent more than 20 years in the hibernation chamber, right?" Lin Lin chipped in. "Moreover, if the inhibitor was used

before adulthood, you would need another ten more years for you to grow to the maturity 18 years old."

"Ten years!" Yao Yao was like a squirrel that had been frightened, but she was still not ready to give up, "But from any perspective, I am already mature."

But the legs dangling on the chair didn't make for convincing argument at all.

"Oh? In what way?" Lin Lin persisted, clearly not letting it go.

As though abandoning all her humiliation, Yao Yao with two red cheeks, closed her eyes.

"I, I already have my period!" she bellowed.

The room turned eerily silent for a moment.

As though the two consecutive verbal sparring had sapped all her energy away, the small loli wobbly sank into her chair.

"Uh, we should discuss the cake." Sun Jiao held her laughter as she averted her gaze.

"Yes, indeed, the cake is more important." Jiang Chen was speechless.

"I second that." Lin Lin raised her spoon as an agreement.

Chapter 183: The Seventh Area

The snow was ferocious.

The concrete walls in the ruins were covered by a layer of ice and the dangling steel beams were frozen into crystalline rods.

Below, ragged figures strolled. There was an unhealthy color on their faces, and their expressions were frozen numb. The heavy loads on their backs crushed their spine and knees.

The person standing on the side was evidently the mutated human supervisor.

For slaves of mutated human, the only escape was to be picked at around 30 years of age through pure luck. From there, finish the breeding mission, immerse in the growth vial, and to be "reborn."

As for the people who were not so lucky, their fate was usually tragic...

Since the growth vial and growth solution were limited, not everyone had rights to become a mutated human. Mutated humans also needed to maintain a population of slaves in order to complete the dreadful tasks that none of them wanted to do and at the same time, the mutated humans needed a source of entertainment.

Standing at the door of the encampment, Troy grimly watched the frail figures as he turned around to look at the human beside

him.

That's right. Beside him, a human stood!

Any survivor in Wanghai city who happens to witness this scene would drop their jaws. Based on common sense, there was no possibility of negotiation between a mutated human and a human, let alone for them to stand side by side.

This person wore a fur coat and the red ring on his finger was quite distinctive. Anyone with the right knowledge would shockingly discover that the white fur on his collar belonged to the mane of the Bloodthirsty Lion.

As the king of dangerous creatures, Bloodthirsty Lions could combat five Death Claws simultaneously. Their sharp teeth were like blades that could easily rip through power armors. But they were rare in the Eastern area as they usually inhabit in the far northwestern plain. Because of their ferocity, they were rarely hunted. Hence, the unique mane gained popularity among collectors.

As for the red ring, it was even more incredible.

It was a blood crystal.

Usually, mutants would form crystals around the nerve center as a highly efficient energy storage device. But blood crystals were unique on its own. Although they were created with the same

elements, blood crystals' energy storage was thousands of times greater. A piece the size of a thumb could be compared to the energy generated from one kilogram of fissile material through nuclear fission.

But what was beyond comprehension was that the blood crystals' existence was stable. Despite people's attempt, they could not use the energy inside. Not even human - the mutants who generated the blood crystal themselves couldn't utilize the energy inside. Precisely, any mutant who creates these blood crystals would be the failure of the spices.

The extraordinary potential and rarity of blood crystals made them a luxurious collector item, especially favored by the nobles in the Northern Alliance Area.

By this point, the man's identity couldn't be more obvious.

He came from the north, and his status was prestigious.

"Mr. Troy, what's the progress for your soldiers?" Bo Yu put his hands in his pocket as he asked the mutated human standing beside him.

"The outpost is already established," Troy cracked a smile exposing his fearsome red gum, "Once the last batch of the armored trucks is completed, my team can head out."

"Oh? Is that right?" The man in luxurious clothes seemed to be

nonchalant to the answer of the mutated human leader as his reply was short.

Silence ensued between the two.

The mutated human called Troy seemed to be fearful of the power coming out of the man from the Northern Alliance, even though this place was thousands of kilometers away from the Northern Alliance, even though this place was his home base.

"Seeing your own people suffer, do you not have any thoughts in your mind?" Troy cracked a smile as he asked disrespectfully.

"We are different from monsters, we don't have to possess those extraneous herd mentality." Bo Yu laughed, not bothered at all.

Troy's eyes narrowed.

The fact that they have always viewed highly of themselves meant that they were particularly sensitive to the fact that humans categorize them as mutated creatures.

"Sorry, I have a phone call." Bo Yu shrugged as he walked to the side, then he pressed the phone to his earlobe.

"Hello?"

"Oh... This is unfortunate then, okay. Mhmm... Keep monitoring

their movements. The name is Jiang Chen right? Interesting, I am going to hang up."

Troy stared gravely at his position.

"Sorry buddy, your outpost seems to be gone." Bo Yu ignored the unfriendliness as he casually strolled beside him.

Troy's throat moved, he didn't overthink it. But the expression on this man's face made him uncertain.

Simultaneous, a mutated human ran from the distance. The frightened look on his face, even from afar in the heavy snow, was clearly visible.

Troy's eyebrows twitched as he looked at Bo Yu on the side. The grin on his face triggered him.

But he couldn't be angry right now.

"Leader, our force stationed in Shenxiang town-"

"Was eliminated?"

The mutated human here to report the news hesitated before he immediately lowered his head and continued his report in a tough tone.

"Yes."

Troy took a deep breath while he tried to calm his ready-to-explode emotion.

"Which force did it..."

"Liuding town... Our people saw their helicopter with binoculars. It was the Type-51 transport helicopter equipped with electromagnetic pulse cannon. Their symbol was below the helicopter."

"How would Liuding town's people appear here?" Troy was shocked.

Although he was skeptical towards this information, he couldn't find an argument against it. Since within the entire area, only Liuding's people possessed air units.

If Liuding town intervened, his plan would be much more difficult to execute.

He thought about this as Troy's eyebrows began to tense up.

He's heard of Liuding's force before. The electromagnetic pulse cannon on the aircraft carriers had a maximum range of 500 kilometers under atmospheric condition. It could be fired from the exit of Long River and directly strike Luzhou. Needless to say, his seventh area was right beside Wanghai city.

"Ahem, I do have to let you know that it was not Liuding town's people who wiped out your outpost." As if he was very familiar with the force distribution within Wanghai city, Bo Yu interrupted.

"Oh?" Troy raised his eyebrows.

"Liuding's people would never install electromagnetic pulse cannon on their helicopter because their electromagnetic cannon could strike any target in Wanghai city freely. Even if you built defensive structures, under the impact of a 100kg bomb, how many seconds would you last" Bo Yu smirked.

"Then, you mean...?"

"Your information is too outdated. A "glorious leader" was born in Qingpu. Under his call for unity and the temptation for food, the scattered survivors unified and built a base called Fishbone on the ruins... Also, according to my research, they have a trade relationship with the Zhao Corporation on the Sixth Street. The exact reason is food related," Bo Yu said.

"Food?" Troy looked at Bo Yu with not the friendliest look, "Based on what I know, on the entire wasteland, the only place that can produce food is the Northern Alliance Area. Can I interpret that you sponsored that force?"

The undeveloped area in the northwestern region was barely scratched during the chaos of the war. Although the soil was

barren, fertilizer was a much simpler problem to solve compared to contamination and radiation. If you go further north, you would reach the front-line between PAC and CCCP. That place also lies in shambles like Wanghai city.

Therefore, in the entire Han area, only northwestern region produced edible crops.

Bo Yu sighed at the information.

"The entire wasteland? By 'entire', do you mean Wanghai city, or within the PAC borders, or the entire world?"

"Is there a point in discussing world geography?" Troy mocked.

"It's all about the structure we are in." Bo Yu shrugged, "Being unable to farm is only because the technology is not on par. Our radiation treatment technology is well designed. If it is not, then even if you were given clean soil, you can not grow anything it. At the same time, as long as the technology is available, any corner of the wasteland can easily grow delicious fresh fruits and vegetables. Their food probably comes from an established garden underground. But these are not the key points, only one thing interests me."

"Project Garden of Eden?" Troy burst out laughing, "This is quite funny. If that Project Garden of Eden could restore farming, then why do those elites flee into space?"

"Because hope afar is far more tempting than dealing with chaos here." Bo Yu smiled as he paused, then he continued, "On space colonization, I maintain the same stance as the dissolved World Alliance Organization."

"But those people didn't let the kiss-@ss-you go on the boat." Troy continued to mock.

"Why would I need a ticket to go on the boat? As long as I have the technology, I can easily build another colonization ship." Bo Yu laughed out loud as he took out his hands from the pockets and pointed to the sky, "Give me 20 years and I'll rebuild a high technology park. Give me 50 years and I'll take the descendants into space again. What should be abandoned is not us, but rather the soil below us!"

"Why don't you learn from us? Evolve then adapt? If you don't try it yourself, you will never know how delicious Death Claw's meat is."

Bo Yu's calm and collected expression flashed a rare glimpse of disgust, but it quickly faded.

"Therefore, discussing value proposition is something more boring than ideology. You'll get the improved FEV virus and you will take your species to adapt to the wasteland. But, remember our deal."

Bo Yu controlled the security password of the Carman Corporation, it was him that provided the FEV virus information

to the mutated humans.

"Of course, I'll lead my people to help you attack 'that place' within the city center. We will find out the location of the Fallout Shelter 005, if it really exists that is."

"Don't worry about that anymore. My information has always been reliable. Fallout Shelter 005 is located in Wanghai city," Bo Yu said confidently.

Troy glanced at Bo Yu before he looked away towards the direction of the slaves.

It used to be an empty plot of land but it was now packed with military supplies.

Rifles, machine guns, armors, armored trucks, even cannons and bombs!

Within this shipment, some belonged to the mutated humans, but the majority was from the man called Bo Yu.

With a common interest, even mutated humans and humans could stand side by side.

"We must go into the city center... Looks like we will need to start our journey in the winter."

Fixated on the snow in the distance, Troy said in an undertone.

Chapter 184: Who should I bring home for New Year

Although it was Yao Yao's birthday, Sun Jiao and Lin Lin all rushed to list their requirements for the birthday cake.

Chocolate.

Mango.

Those were definitely what they wanted to eat.

Instead, the protagonist of the birthday – Yao Yao, feebly expressed that any flavored cake was fine, as long as brother Jiang Chen likes it.

[Ahh...Yao Yao is the cutest.]

Jiang Chen shouted in his mind.

...

Therefore, Jiang Chen specifically made a trip back to the modern world.

"You are back." Ayesha happened to pass by just in time to see Jiang Chen come out of the door, she tilted her head and asked.

Before, he would stay for a long time before making a trip back, but now it seemed to be much more frequent.

Last time it was five days ago. He came to buy emblems?

"I came back to buy something. Oh, do you want to head out with me?" Jiang Chen suggested out of the blue.

He knew nothing about cakes. In his memory, he hasn't celebrated a birthday in a long time. It would be better to have a girl's opinion.

"Mhmm." She didn't ask what he wanted to buy as she gently nodded.

Ayesha changed into a Gothic-style skirt, white stockings, and black platform shoes. She held onto Jiang Chen's hand as they left the house. Because she was usually very shy about being intimate in public, her unwillingness to let go and her blushed face was particularly cute.

They bought this set of clothes in Ukraine last time.

Jiang Chen opened the garaged door as he sat in the front passenger seat. Ayesha sat in the driver position.

Her driving skill was acquired from the virtual reality training

system. As to the driver license... is anything difficult to obtain if money is involved?

"Where are we going?"

"Shimao Mall." Jiang Chen gave it a thought, but the only place he could think of that was prosperous was the shopping mall in the city center.

"Mhmm." Ayesha softly combed her brown hair to the side of her face, she smiled tenderly while starting the car.

Although it was the same Wanghai city, in the midst of November, the Sun here was much more graceful here with only a hint of chillness mixed in the air. It was fair to expect that in the modern world, Wanghai city would have a warm winter.

Jiang Chen watched the scenes on the streets fading away in the window. For some reason, he began to feel melancholic.

Who would have thought, in another dimension, the same place one hundred years later, would become a place filled with zombies?

But all these things were too distant.

Jiang Chen was amazed by the beauty of Ayesha as she drove. He couldn't resist and snapped a photo of her.

Sensing Jiang Chen's action, Ayesha's gorgeous eyes lit up.

"Does it look good?"

She asked, her eyes still maintained focus on the road. But Jiang Chen felt like all her attention was on his phone.

"Of course." Jiang Chen smiled.

After receiving a positive response, the tips of Ayesha's mouth curved up joyfully.

"But it would be better if it was bigger." Jiang Chen stared at the photo for a while before he suddenly let out a sigh and muttered to himself.

Although he toned down his voice, this sentence still didn't escape Ayesha's ear.

Instantly, the graceful hand clenched tighter onto the steering wheel.

"Eh, is, is it my breast? I have been eating papaya and drinking milk, but it still is a process..." Ayesha said while her eyes looked listless.

"No, not that." Seeing the car that just skidded by them, Jiang

Chen' sweated profusely as he rushed to comfort her, "Its age, age!"

"Eh?" Surprised by Jiang Chen's explanation, Ayesha asked, confused, but her emotional soothed down while the car returned to the normal track.

"Umm, how should I explain this? We have a holiday, or tradition, in Han... All in all, I have to take a girlfriend back by February 8th of next year to see my parents." Embarrassed, Jiang Chen explained.

It was hard to imagine that the renowned Future Technology president did not have a girlfriend to bring home for the New Year.

Jiang Chen had kept in contact with the family. Since he was rich, he wished for his parents to live a better life.

To prevent the two elders from not sleeping well, after deliberate consideration, Jiang Chen decided not to reveal that he became the president of a billion dollar company. He only said that he made a decent amount of money doing business and planned to explain the whole situation to them when he returned for New Year.

At the end of every month, he would send half a million to the card that his dad previously used to send his allowance. In the beginning, his dad did not accept it. He stubbornly sent it back until Jiang Chen finally announced that he already bought a house in Wanghai, and that he was rich enough to not worry about money anymore. The stubborn father finally reluctantly accepted the money.

Every parent wishes their children would live a good life. In their eyes, half a million was an astronomical number already. Their entire life saving was only this amount. They were already satisfied that Jiang Chen could support himself in a completely foreign city. They wouldn't spend that much money anyways after they retire, plus they could take their retirement fund to live the rest of their lives without worry. That half a million was saved so their son could get a house. The thought of receiving money from their son never even crossed their mind.

The one thing they did think of, was when they would have grandchildren.

Now that the house is there, what about the wife?

Under his parents' persistence, Jiang Chen awkwardly indicated he didn't have anyone yet. Since the generation gap was there, he did not dare to tell his parents that, "your son does not have a wife, but has a mistress."

It would be better if Ayesha was a bit older. If that was the case, then taking her home for New Year would not only satisfy his parents' thought of having grandchildren, it would also satisfy their vanity. In a small town of Huchen, marrying a foreigner was a glorious act.

Nurtured by the nutrient solution, Ayesha's skin was as smooth as a porcelain doll. To Jiang Chen, it was a great thing, but the "disadvantage" was that she looked too young.

Especially with Ayesha's Lolita appearance...

No matter which perspective he took, bringing a loli home was a terrible idea.

"New Year right?" Hearing that her husband did not mind her size, Ayesha was relieved. She gently smiled, "If you don't mind, I can be your girlfriend and go home with you."

To Jiang Chen's surprise, Ayesha knew Han New Year already. But when he gave a thought, it made sense as she already comprehended the language Han, and thus, there was no reason not to know the traditions. Just like when he learned English, he learned of Christmas.

"Why would I mind? But the problem is not that." Jiang Chen was exasperated, "Within Han, the legal age for marriage is 20. Although it could be worked around with money, my parents are the stubborn type, therefore... Therefore it is complicated."

Ayesha tilted her tiny head, she was born in Syria so naturally, she didn't understand the laws here. In her hometown, it was not uncommon for girls 12 or 13 years of age to be married. In her head, she thought she was marrying late.

The topic didn't continue.

The car quickly arrived at the Shimao building. When they

finished parking, Jiang Chen held onto Ayesha's hand and walked into the Christine cake store.

In his memory, this should be most famous cake store in the area.

As to the price, he didn't really care.

But just as he pushed open the glass door, Jiang Chen was shocked by what he saw.

...

Chapter 185: The Gloom of War

"Welcome-" Fang Yuanyuan raised her head, but in the middle of the sentence, she froze.

Jiang Chen stiffened as he stood before the door. A peculiar expression appeared on his face.

He didn't expect to meet this woman coincidentally again.

Ayesha tilted her head as she stared at Jiang Chen and then the receptionist.

She seemed to have understood the situation. She gently pulled Jiang Chen's hand as she whispered, "Should we go to another store?"

"There is no need." Jiang Chen smiled as he squeezed her hand.

Although he disliked this person, his dislike was not to the point where he would avoid her on purpose.

When Jiang Chen walked towards her direction, Fang Yunyuan lowered her head.

"Hello, what would you like?"

Her voice was unnatural. Jiang Chen noticed that her fingers

were slightly trembling.

[She must be afraid.]

"Cake, with chocolate, and mango... Umm, just give me the menu." He let out a sigh as he didn't want to bully her. Instead, he responded with certainty.

Jiang Chen took over the menu from her hand and they began to pick.

Seeing the girl beside Jiang Chen, Fang Yuanyuan felt teary for some reason.

The door was suddenly pushed open and a man in plain clothes walked in with a delicate lunchbox.

"Yuanyuan, are you hungry?" The man's forehead had a scar, but his smile was bright as he flashed his white teeth.

Fang Yuanyuan's cheeks turned red as she nodded and quietly took over the lunchbox from his hand.

"Mhmm, thanks, but I am still working..."

"I'll leave you to it then, I have to go back to work too, see you later."

Jiang Chen, with the corner of his eye, examined them, intrigued. The man's face had a joyful smile as he energetically stepped out of the room.

"This cake should be good."

Ayesha pointed at a chocolate cake that was decorated with fruits.

"This one it is." Jiang Chen refocused on the menu. He gladly accepted her recommendation.

These high-class cake stores usually offer delivery services. Jiang Chen took the receipt from Fang Yuanyuan's hand and asked out of curiosity, "your boyfriend?"

Fang Yuanyuan's looked away with complications in her eyes, she nodded.

"Mhmm."

"Does he know your past?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"No." Fang Yuanyuan bit her lips as she said quietly.

"Do you regret it?"

Fang Yuanyuna didn't respond. Instead, she looked at him, pleading with her eyes.

"Please don't tell him? I know you hate me, but Little Cong is a good guy, I don't want him-"

Jiang Chen raised his hand to interrupt her as he smiled.

"First, there is no need to talk about hate. Second, I have no interest in creating problems for other people. I am only curious... Whatever, I already know the answer."

Seeing the chef hat on Fang Yuanyuan's head, as well as the simple makeup, the answer was already clear to him.

When Jiang Chen left with the girl's hand in his, the look on Fang Yuanyuan's face turned perplexed.

She had a fantasy of marrying rich and live the life of a female protagonist like the ones in TV drama. She almost achieved this dream when she was a real estate salesperson. A boss proposed to her, but she chose to wait, thinking that her beauty could do better than him and gain more of a material enjoyment...

Without her realizing it, she slowly turned from a bi*th to a sl*t.

In the end, what is the difference between what she did and prostitution?

When did she realize this?

Perhaps it was that one night, when she was thrown out of Hongyi Private Club like a tool. The mockery sight of ten thousand bills thrown at her woke her up as if cold water was poured onto her head. She felt like she was being shooed away like a homeless person.

It was late into the night and she didn't have her phone. She waited for a while at the side of the road but didn't manage to get a taxi. In the end, she could only drag her wry body and disheveled clothes as she numbly walked back to her rented apartment.

On her way home, she encountered two drunk perverts who mistook her for a prostitute. They tried to violate her and she desperately fought back. However, the more she struggled, the more it excited them.

Just as she was about to lose hope, he appeared.

He was not tall nor did he look that strong, but he still bravely stood in front of her.

She was shocked at the fact that there would be a fool in this world who was willing to stand up for her - for a filthy woman.

But he couldn't beat the two perverts.

He was only able to guard a few moves before the beer bottle exploded on his forehead.

Blood began to pour, the brave "fool" didn't even flinch before he collapsed on the ground.

Perhaps awakened by the bloody scene, the two people immediately turned sober. Because they were afraid of accidentally killing someone, they fled the scene.

Seeing the man on the ground, as well as the glass shards and blood, Fang Yuanyuan was stunned. "Rationality" told her the most convenient action was to not say a word and run, pretending nothing happened, and leave the "fool" here.

But to her own surprise, she didn't trust the "rationality" that supported her throughout her life. Without thinking much, she knelt down, picked up a glass shard, ripped off a piece of her two thousand dollar dress, and bandaged up his head.

The terrifying blood made her tremble uncontrollably.

On the street that was void of life, she shouted, yelled, but the cars passed by all accelerated and left.

No one was willing and no one dared to stop the car to help them.

It was already midnight, the rural area was not the safest place.

A man whose face was full of blood was lying on the ground. If they stopped and gave them a ride, the man might die in their own car.

There might be a lawsuit and then a payout a settlement. If they were terribly unlucky, they might even have to go to prison.

In this apathetic society, the cost of sympathy was too high.

Especially if there was still work the next day.

Luckily, the world still has kind strangers. A pickup truck eventually stopped. The driver of the truck carried the barely-breathing man onto the car and rushed them to the nearest hospital.

After going into the emergency room for hours, the "fool" lived.

She didn't know why. The "her" who has always loved money didn't hesitate when she used the "reward" from Zhou Zihao to pay the medical bill.

She also stayed with him until he woke up.

His name was Wang Cong. His ordinary name with the white t-shirt that he wore made him look even more dowdy.

He only left university this year, a programmer in an IT company.

When Fang Yuanyuan asked why he stood up for her, he blushed and looked away.

"I didn't think too much, when I saw you walking alone outside being bothered by two obviously rude people. I did what I did with a hot head."

"Did you even consider the possible that you could have died?"

Wang Cong looked at her blankly as he forced a smile, "I probably wouldn't have died. Murder is too big of a crime in today's society."

One of her nerves malfunctioned as Fang Yunayuan asked unreasonably, "If you knew you were going to die, would you still have helped me?"

He kept his silence for a while.

Wang Cong scratched the back of his head as he smiled humbly.

"Yeah...I can't watch a good girl being ruined."

That night, she wore a white colored dress.

Good girl?

When Fang Yuanyuan heard the word, she teared up for some reason.

She cried and she regretted.

Afterwards, she handed in her resignation at the real estate company and found the work she has now.

Then, they decided to be together.

He didn't have a house, nor did he have a six-figure saving's account.

That night, Wang Cong proposed to her.

She accepted it.

As for money, it was no longer important.

...

When he left the cake store, Jiang Chen suddenly started laughing.

Ayesha turned to look at him, puzzled.

"Did something good happened?"

"No, I wouldn't say it is good, I just think it is interesting." Jiang Chen put his hand on Ayesha's head as he gently rubbed it.

"Interesting?"

"Mhmm, an old friend of mine received the finale meant for her."

"Finale?" Ayesha, deep in thought, put up her finger against her bottom lip, "What would be considered the finale for someone?"

To Ayesha's question, Jiang Chen paused, but then a smiled quickly emerged.

"It's hard to say, but from a bystander's perspective, if there is nothing to expect for the rest of the story, then that should be the finale."

Ayesha half-understandingly nodded.

...

Apocalypse.

On the bank of Taifu river.

The feather-like snow blew in the sky, a thin layer of ice covered the river, the bridge across the river was blown apart, and a layer of whiteness covered the bank across the river. On top of the snow, there were a few indistinguishable black dots.

"What are those mutated humans doing?"

Hiding inside the snowed hidden fortress, Zhang Lin held the digital binocular as he focused across the river bank with his eyebrows twisted together.

Zhao Gang, who stood on the side, was silent, but gloom covered his face.

They previously thought that the mutated humans with wiped outposts and lost supplies would be more obedient. They thought that they would have the luxury of waiting until the next spring to plan. But it looks like they want to fight.

Based on the information obtained from the drones, there were at least two hundred mutated humans stationed across the river bank.

Large quantities of construction supplies were transported to the empty land and built into a small supply station. The snow removing vehicle and slaves somehow managed to clear out a road on the tens of kilometers of highway covered in snow.

The armored trucks listed in formations as the daunting anti-air machine guns and the menacing cannons lined up to create an iron forest.

"What should we do?" Zhang Lin looked at Zhao Gang on the side.

Zhao Gang took a deep breath and he said calmly.

"Report to the base, if there are 500 more people here, we probably can't defend..."

The river was the slowest here. Once it entered ice season, the river would be frozen firmly. Even the mutated human with steel armors could easily run on the ice.

Once the mutated humans with number advantage start to charge, Fishbone could not defend the river with only five Tigers.

Once they captured the river bank, repair the blown up bridge, their armored force would cross the Taifu River and into Qingpu area.

Gazing upon the snowy hill in the distance, Zhao Gang's eyebrows furrowed together.

A hard battle was imminent.

Chapter 186: The Declaration of War

Inside Sixth Street's towering walls.

It was the most prosperous place on the wasteland, a city that never slept built among the ruins.

In the heart of this bustling place, stood a magnificent dome building. Its structure was similar to Houses of Parliament, symbolizing the unity flag fluttering above.

It represented power, the brain of the entire Sixth Street.

Within the council chamber of the building, the Council of Ten members gathered around the round table.

Sixth Street was on doing fairly well for a while now, however, what was surprising was that the dignitaries sitting here had no smile on their faces.

As the president of Zhao Corporation, Zhao Chenwu was obviously among them. Sitting across him was his competitor, the boss in the giant firearm company, Feng De. Usually, they would mock each other as part of their routine every time they meet, but this time both of them had gloom all over their face with both keeping their silence.

Sitting on the seat pointing at the door was an old man with rectangular face and white sideburns, he coughed and broke the

silent atmosphere at the table.

Although the Council of Ten had an equal status, on the wasteland ruled by the powerful, the right to speak was naturally proportional to the strength.

Cao Jinsong, the president of Crimson Chamber of Commerce, had a force that was not limited to the Sixth Street, and his mercenaries base stretched as far as Su City. He controlled 60% of the genetic vaccine of the pharmaceutical market share in Sixth Street, and although he did not take part of the firearm dealings, his private force was the strongest in the Sixth Street.

"Prowler" tanks equipped with a particle cannon and outfitted with heavy physical armor and particle shield. The tank possessed attack, defense, and mobility, making it perhaps the strongest land unit in the wasteland.

And he had five of these tanks.

"Everyone's time is precious. I suppose we didn't gather here to just stare in the air, isn't that right?" Spreading out his hands, Cao Jinsong spoke without preamble.

"That's true. Then shall we start the meeting?" Zhao Chenwu crossed his fingers, his elbow resting on the table.

"I second that."

"That's right, I still have an engagement after this, so let's get this over with."

"..."

Quietly waiting for the sound to subside, Cao Jinsong pressed his hand on the conference table and uttered, "Although everyone should have already seen this, I will play it again."

Dark blue particles began to levitate in the center of the table as a holographic image formed in the middle which converged into a half body portrait.

"Hello everyone from Wanghai City."

The man clad in military uniforms seemed arrogant.

"After seeing this image, our people would already be on their way."

"We all agreed that you're sitting on the treasures from your predecessors, but you don't think of improving yourself. You sit on a huge amount of treasures, but you settle for status quo and enjoy a lavish life. We can't wait any longer, I think we need to have a good chat."

"Of course, this doesn't mean I'm here to negotiate with you."

"That's right, this is a declaration of war.

"Northern Alliance District, General Wang Beihai. Signing off."

The image disappeared.

There was a frightening silence around the table.

Zhao Chenwu took a deep breath, stretched his hand to gently fix his collar, and looked anxiously at his colleagues around him. Anger, alarm, disdain, and timidity.

Sitting across him was his nemesis, Feng De, who used a tissue to wipe the sweat off his forehead while anxiously adjusting his sitting position.

But Cao Jinsong's look was rather calm as there was not much of a change in his expression.

"They're crazy! They are just a bunch of lunatics. These...Northern Alliance District? If I remember correctly, that place is 1,500 kilometers away from here! Do they think they can fly all the way here? Or are they saying they could slaughter their way through half of Han's zombies?"

A tall middle-aged man roared with disdain.

"Furthermore, it's a winter expedition, To procure winter

supplies for a 1,500-kilometer trek, don't those people need to eat?"

"They sure are that confident to win, eh? Do they really think no one is here in Sixth Street?"

"..."

Cao Jinsong silently looked at the council members around the table as his index finger rhythmically tapped on the table.

"Winter expedition...why must it be in winter? In our eyes, it is indeed a foolish move, but why do they insist on doing this?" Taking a deep breath, Zhao Chenwu stated.

Cao Jinsong gave him a startled look and nodded his head slightly.

Upon hearing someone pointed out this question, the previously volatile council members began to calm down. They got confused by the arrogance of that general, however, now that they had given it some thought, something was definitely amiss.

"According to the information my people had gathered in Luzhou, the Northern Alliance District indeed appeared there. They are currently building an outpost in Luzhou rural area with a large number of people." Cao Jinsong drawled.

"Luzhou? Could it be..." The council member's expression sitting next to Cao Jinsong suddenly shifted.

‘That’s right, they used the underground highway.” Cao Jinsong nodded.

"That thing was already broken. How could they use that?" Someone asked derisively.

Highway, railway, magnetic levitation, and other transportation infrastructures were all targeted during the war. The underground highway was no exception. NATO’s satellite weapons deployed 57 pressure bombs that blasted the underground highway into several sections, which was used by PAC to transport military supplies during the war.

"Be that as it may, the underground passage between the Northwestern area to Luzhou has been repaired, so this might be the only explanation as to how their people could appear here."

After hearing Cao Jinsong's words, everyone became silent once again.

Seeing no one was talking, Cao Jinsong paused and continued: "Since this is a declaration of war, then war has become a foregone conclusion. For their arrogance and foolishness, we will naturally respond with guns, this is without a doubt. But there are still a lot of confusing things here...aren't you a little bit curious? What prompted them to make a reckless decision to declare war during winter from 1,500 kilometers away?"

"He mentioned about the treasure, but the question is: what

treasures is he talking about? We've been living here for so many years, and we haven't found anything yet. How could there be goddamn treasures here?" A man with a beer belly couldn't help but swear.

"Winter expedition to avoid mutants, and since they're using the underground passage, they naturally don't need to concern themselves with the mutants along the way. Then there is only one possibility...their destination could only be reached in the winter," Zhao Chenwu said with a firm tone.

Cao Jinsong nodded with approval and looked at all the council members present.

"I share the same thought as council member Zhao. If there is any place we have yet to set our foot on, it should be none other than the downtown."

Chapter 187: Sword of Damocles

Before the war, Wanghai city was a major metropolitan in the world. It possessed the biggest technology park within PAC as well as a countless research facilities.

Because of this, after the war erupted, Wanghai city immediately became the focal point between PAC and NATO in the east coast battle. It was the obvious destination for nuclear and biological weapon attacks. Damage was especially brutal within the city center where it was blown into a scorched piece of land, where only extreme mutants or already dead zombies could survive.

On this piece of wasteland, the city center became the synonym for danger. Even the strongest hunting teams had not stepped into this forbidden territory. The countless number of zombies, the nest of zombie eaters, the unimaginably powerful mutants... The risk and reward tradeoff of exploring the zombies dominated area was not justified by any means.

As to when the city center would be relatively safer, it was during winter.

In the winter, most of the mutants would go into hibernation, thus, the only trouble that remained was the zombie.

But despite this...

"City center? Other than nuclear craters and scrap metals, what else is there?" A council member with a square frame glasses

scorned at the thought.

"Perhaps there is a lethal weapon left by the preceding government? Or perhaps a USB containing mysterious codes? Regardless what there is, our neighbor is clearly interested. We have enough evidence to believe that they have strong reasons for putting their nose up our business from thousands of miles away," Cao Jinsong smiled.

"If they just want to go into the city center, why don't they negotiate with us?" Zhao Chenwu frowned as he said in an undertone, "We don't have to fight, we could work together. For example, providing supplies for their army for a commission amount..."

"What do you think the Northern Alliance Area is? A hunting team stationed at our place? Provide supplies? They could just raid us. They are not merchants, they are bandits under a military government." A council member mocked.

"Disregarding whether if they could beat us or not. Even if they win, would they have enough force left to enter the city center? I agree with Councilmember Zhao's perspective, their action is unusual. Perhaps there is some hidden truth we don't know about." A sophisticated-looking council member added.

"It's because of arrogance." Feng De sneered.

"But arrogance has nothing to do with intelligence. They choose to start a war knowing cooperation would be the best choice,

unless-

"Unless that treasure is tempting enough," Cao Jinsong opened his mouth, the fingers that were crossed together in front of his face covered his nose. "They believe the value of the treasure, and believe that if we know about the treasure, we would fight for it with all our forces. Even the reputation we built for over 10 years cannot guarantee our honesty."

"Then what is that treasure?" someone asked.

"I personally lean towards the possibility of it being a weapon," a mysterious smile flashed across Cao Jinsong's face. He then lowered his voice, "If there is a super weapon that could instantly suppress a base or even a city-

"That's impossible, if a weapon like that really existed, then it must have been a top priority during the war." Someone rebutted.

"I agree. Also, how do they know that the city center of Wanghai really possessed such thing?"

As to other council members' rebuttal, Cao Jinsong didn't mind as he smiled with collectedness.

He took a momentary pause before he continued.

"We are all unfortunate people who didn't manage to get into the fallout shelter. I know that you all are no strangers to that war. I

am talking about the sky-based weapon that destroyed the Holy Shield - the God's Cane."

When they heard the name God's Cane, everyone held their breath.

That was a long time ago, but even today, after ten something years, they could not forget what happened that day.

The dome that covered the sky evaporated under the blue particles, followed by airdrop soldiers that fell like rain.

Zhao Chenwu looked at Cao Jinsong in disbelief as he spoke disheartenedly, "Didn't that thing get blasted into pieces? I remember the PAC special force captured it and NATO initiated self-destruction-"

"Based on my super computer's data-modeling analysis..." Cao Jinsong took a graphite chip from his pocket and waved it in between his fingers before he put it on the table.

The hologram image displayed again, the web-like structure simulated the earth, as well as the sky-based weapon hovering on top – God's Cane.

"259 kilograms of TNT's self-destruction, the weapon parts would fall in the middle of Wanghai city." The web-weaved God's Cane turned red as it drew a trajectory and pointed at the location on earth in Wanghai city.

"If they acquired the parts of God's Cane, repaired it, and fired it into space again, it will become the sword of Damocles (1) that hangs above all of us. It will become our eternal nightmare."

Followed by his last words, the hologram image disappeared, and the atmosphere around the conference table turned cold.

Everyone's expression took a turn.

Other than fear and anger, it also carried a hint of greed.

"What do they want to do..."Zhao Chenwu squeezed those words out.

"Conquer, or enslave." Cao Jinsong's finger gently tapped on the table, "They want to continue their dictatorship outside of the Northwestern area. Other than this, I can't think of any other reasons."

"Resistance is necessary. The freedom's spirit will not bend for dictators, that is without a doubt. There are only two choices in front of us."

"First, before they come to Wanghai, explore the city center by ourselves. If there really is a super weapon, we can use it against them."

"Second, protect our treasure and fight our invaders until the last drop of blood."

"Then, by tradition, let's vote."

Cao Jinsong smiled mischievously as he pressed the vote button.

....

The final vote resulted in an absolute landslide victory of 2:8 to the second option – fight against the invaders.

Even during winter, it was risky to explore the city center. They might end up paying a price for this if they do not find the weapon, or if the treasure was not a weapon to begin with. Even if it was a weapon, it could not be used in a short period of time because of the need for repair. This would indubitably increase the variables in the war.

Most of the people chose the safer option. To first eliminate the external threat before exploring the treasure within the ruins.

After the meeting, the council members began to depart.

When Zhao Chenwu walked out of the chamber, Zhao Chenwu's eyebrows furrowed. Su Lei, who was waiting at the door, saw her boss leave. She immediately greeted him.

"Is there any problem?" As the right and left hands of the boss, Su Lei asked.

"No problem, I just think something is not right." Zhao Chenwu said in an undertone.

"About our business?"

"No... Hopefully it is just my illusion."

Seeing his colleagues leave in brisk steps, for some reason, uneasiness began to sprout in his mind.

(1) The famed "sword of Damocles" dates back to an ancient moral parable popularized by the Roman philosopher Cicero in his 45 B.C. book "Tusculan Disputations." Cicero's version of the tale centers on Dionysius II, a tyrannical king who once ruled over the Sicilian city of Syracuse during the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. Though rich and powerful, Dionysius was supremely unhappy. His iron-fisted rule had made him many enemies, and he was tormented by fears of assassination—so much so that he slept in a bedchamber surrounded by a moat and only trusted his daughters to shave his beard with a razor. (Courtesy: History.com)

Chapter 188: A Victory belonged to the Small Animal

"Happy birthday to you~..."

The melody of the birthday song harmonized perfectly with the clapping hands as the song echoed throughout the old mansion.

It was already night and there was no light on.

The room was dark. Only 16 candles illuminated and lit up the blushed face.

Bang!

Colorful confetti exploded alongside three genuine wishes.

"Happy birthday!"

"Tha...Thank you." Yao Yao's eyes were decorated with mists of excitement. Her tiny hands clenched onto the tip of her dress, and she bowed deeply to express her appreciation.

It has been many years since she was this happy.

But before she could finish, an unharmonious voice interrupted the touching atmosphere.

"Oh my! Cake, mango, gulp." Lin Lin chuckled moonily at the cake as her fists clenched on the fork.

"You are drooling! Fool." Sun Jiao grabbed her by the collar as she lifted back Lin Lin, who was approaching the cake. At the same time, she gave her a scorned look.

"Wooo!" Lin Lin retracted her neck as she pouted her mouth feeling wronged, "Didn't we agree on eating the cake after singing the birthday song?"

"We still have to blow out the candle, wait a bit longer." Jiang Chen's mood was particularly delightfully today as he gave a rare tender smile to Lin Lin.

"If it is only a bit longer." Lin Lin looked away with her face blushed.

Under the dim light, no one noticed the red hue on her face.

"Go ahead, Yao Yao, you are the star today." Sun Jiao extended her hand with a smile as she put it around Yao Yao's shoulder.

"Remember to make a wish." Jiang Chen said.

"Mhmm!" The pretty face was red because of excitement. Yao Yao's tiny head nodded fiercely.

She approached the candles with excitement as she took a deep breath.

"Woosh-"

16 candle flames flared by her breath. Each candle was filled with a young girl's wish.

From now on, Yao Yao has officially entered her sweet sixteenth.

The light turned back on.

With a pure white princess dress, soft hair that dangled to her chest, and white stocking paired with black chauffers, she looked like a girl who just walked out of a fairy tale.

"Cut the cake. I want the cake!" Lin Lin couldn't wait any longer, her silver hair swayed, but her one red and one black pupil stared at the pieces of mangos on the cake as she continued to gulp.

Sun Jiao lifted the plastic knife as she started to portion the cake.

"Is it okay to cut the letters? Or should I avoid the letters."

Born in a fallout shelter, it was her first time seeing a cake. She only remembered that she ate something called chocolate before. Just a small piece was sweet enough to melt her. But now, the

chocolate was made into a cake the size of a plate.

The white vanilla cream and the colorful fruits were just like a piece of art. She didn't want to cut it.

"Ahhh! Don't hesitate anymore, my mango!" Lin Lin reached her hand out desperately as she tried to fight for the plastic knife in Sun Jiao's hand.

"Rowdy." Sun Jiao obviously would not let Lin Lin succeed so she easily took care of her.

Yao Yao, on the other hand, was quieter. Her face blushed as she closely leaned on Jiang Chen. Her cheery-like mouth panted as her chest raised up and down. She looked nervous.

As to why she was nervous... that was because of tonight...

"Are you happy today?" Jiang Chen gently squeezed Yao Yao's hand as he smiled.

Seeing the warm smile on his face, Yao Yao shyly stared at the chocolate vanilla cake in front of her and she grinned softly.

"I am happy."

"Speaking of this, I thought it was your 17th birthday today... Do we really need 37 candles?" Jiang Chen suddenly added a smirk to

his face.

The cute mouth immediately pouted.

"Woo... Don't be mean to me today." Yao Yao said softly as she gently dragged the tip of his shirt.

"Haha, sorry, I can't resist because you are too cute." He caressed Yao Yao's longhair. Seeing the slightly narrowed and loving eyes and the lightly shaking eyelashes, a joyful smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

The feeling of home was probably similar to this.

"Speaking of this, what did you wish for?"

Hearing this, Yao Yao's face turned red as her eyes quickly glanced at him before moving away.

"It would not be a wish if I say it out loud, it's a secret..." She said quietly.

She certainly minded.

Just as Jiang Chen was about to tease the small loli more, a light door-knock transmitted from the living room.

Sun Jiao looked at Jiang Chen to ask for his opinion, Jiang Chen shrugged before he walked to the living room and opened the door.

Wang Qin stood outside. Her nose turned vibrant red because of the chillness. Her freckled face had some ice shards on it.

The night on the wasteland was frigid, particularly in the winter.

Seeing how her frozen face was written with worry, Jiang Chen turned serious.

"Come in first."

Wang Qin nodded sincerely, she ducked under the door and shook the snow off her body.

"Do you need a cup of hot water?" Seeing how cold she was, Jiang Chen asked caringly.

But she waved her head signaling a "no" and she took a deep breath of the warm air before she looked at Jiang Chen. "The mutated humans, they are coming from the Seventh Area and they are setting up camps across from Taifu River. It is rumored that... Awechu!"

As she spoke, she suddenly sneezed.

Seeing her disjointed look, Jiang Chen sighed as he headed into

the kitchen and poured a cup of hot water for her.

"Thank you." Wang Qin sat on the sofa and held onto the steamy cup. Signs of bloodflow finally began to show on her face.

"Sit down and say it slowly. There is no need to rush. Don't forget any details." Jiang Chen sat across from Wang Qin and said in a stern tone.

She nodded before she took a deep breath and collected her thoughts.

"This afternoon, Zhao Gang sent information from Shenxiang town..."

Wang Qin described in detail the movements of mutated humans to Jiang Chen, including the force distribution, the number of equipment detected by the drones, as well as the request for backup from Zhao Gang.

Hearing her description, Jiang Chen pondered for a moment.

"What's the production status of Tiger?"

"We only produced two new units as of now and the workers are already working around the clock." Wang Qin said, troubled.

"What about the drones?"

"47 units."

"Mhmm, I see." His finger on his chin, Jiang Chen fell into deep thought.

Mutated humans were planning to fight until death. They chose to invade during winter even with their outpost taken out. The motive certainly surprised him.

Although the Carman Pharmaceutical Corporation was near the city center, it was not within the vicinity of the city center. From any point of view, it would be a wiser choice to head to the Carman building when spring came around rather than fighting through the river during the winter.

Was there any reason they must fight in the winter?

Unless their target was not only the Carman building but the city center as well?

"Tell Zhao Gang that the backup will arrive immediately."

Wang Qin nodded, but a troubled look flashed across her face.

"New recruit training is still underway. There are only 70 soldiers available to fight in the base. If we send too many people..."

She didn't complete the sentence, but the meaning was obvious.

If the defense of the base is weak, they might not be able to control the slaves.

"I'll take care of the problem, just reply this way." Jiang Chen smiled.

Perhaps because his smile was confident, Wang Qin's concern immediately vanished.

She nodded with a smile before she left.

Seeing Wang Qin leave, Jiang Chen pondered for a long moment and closed the door.

He readjusted his mood before he went back to the dining room.

"Did something happen?" Sun Jiao seemed to have sensed something.

"Nothing." Jiang Chen smiled, signaling her not to worry.

But this time, he saw Lin Lin twitching on the chair with vanilla smeared all over her face. His expression changed.

The naughty Sun Jiao seemed to have noticed Jiang Chen's stare

as her face turned red. She looked at the ceiling, raised her proud chest, and pretended that nothing happened.

"Don't bully Lin Lin that much."

Sun Jiao stuck out her tongue and suddenly grabbed him by the arm. She giggled and inched closer to his ear.

"I am full, let's go play games?"

[I haven't even eaten yet.] Jiang Chen facepalmed in his mind.

But the tenderness he felt from his arm made his mind drift elsewhere.

"No, not acceptable!" Yao Yao with her ears on high alert immediately jumped on like a squirrel whose tail just got stepped on. She ran over and dragged onto the other hand of Jiang Chen, and looked at Sun Jiao in remorse, "We already agreed that the star today is me..."

"We already agreed?" Jiang Chen paused as he looked confusedly between Sun Jiao and Yao Yao.

"Ahem, uhh, I changed my mind, I'll give him to you tomorrow." Sun Jiao didn't answer Jiang Chen's question. Instead, she looked away awkwardly.

"Woo-!" Yao Yao bloated her cheeks as the adorable eyebrows immediately raised up, but they soon softened down.

"You already ate all the good food, you can't even let the small animal drink some soup?"

The saddened voice made Sun Jiao's face look somewhat embarrassed. She didn't say anything.

Seeing Sister Sun Jiao had no reaction, Yao Yao didn't give up. She lightly gritted her teeth to give herself the courage as she continued to use the soft voice to persuade her, "If you eat meat every day, you will become sick of it."

Sun Jiao's expression was evidently moved. Jiang Chen still looked at the two of them in bewilderment, not understanding why the conversation topic suddenly turned to food.

Seeing the words were effective, Yao Yao secretively posed a success gesture with her hands as she built on her success. "The occasional vegetable would be good for your health. Also, if the small animal doesn't taste good, wouldn't it demonstrate the attractiveness of the big dairy cow..."

Sun Jiao with a blushed face said, "What...what's big dairy cow."

"Uh, what are you guys talking about?" Jiang Chen scratched his face in confusion.

Her conflicted eyes moved between Yao Yao and Jiang Chen as her stance wavered.

Although she already decided...[Wooo! This is annoying!]

[But-]

[If you eat meat every day, you will become sick of it.]

"Ahhh! I don't care anymore, do whatever you want." Sun Jiao said in defeat as she escaped without looking back.

Jiang Chen stared at the fleeting Sun Jiao blankly before he looked at Yao Yao, who had a red hue on her face. A troubled smile appeared on his face.

"Uh, what just happened?"

"Nothing." Yao Yao's head shook furiously as she put her hands behind her back timidly.

She smiled tenderly, as she posted a success gesture with her hand behind her back.

The victory belonged to the small animal!

Chapter 189: The Duet of the Assassination at Night

After the shower, Jiang Chen raised his hand to knock on Sun Jiao's door, but there was no reaction in the room.

"What's the matter with this girl today?"

With a head full of question marks, Jiang Chen returned to his own room.

Although he could go back and sleep in the modern world, he felt that it would weaken his spirit. What's more, there's not much of a difference whether he slept here or on the other side. The only difference was the person he's sleeping with...

He turned off the light and laid in bed.

Jiang Chen closed his eyes and began to think about the mutated humans.

There was a scarcity of soldiers in the base, and the mutated humans didn't play by the book. As for how to resolve the problem, he already had a plan formulating in his mind, it was just the specifics that required more thinking.

While his mind drifted off, he began to succumb to drowsiness.

But just as he was about to doze off, there was a gentle knock on the door.

The corner of his mouth had a touch of smile as he pretended to not hear anything and closed his eyes and pretended to be asleep.

[This girl is actually sneaking in at night. We'll see how I'll teach you a lesson...]

The door was slightly pushed open, and a faint light pervaded in the room before it quickly faded away.

The steps were light as it carried a faint scent of Jasmine, disturbing Jiang Chen's heart.

The quilt was pulled out of the corner and someone slipped under the sheets.

Jiang Chen was smirking and pretending to be oblivious while turning his body before putting his arm around the dainty figure.

Wait! Dainty?

"Woo," The feeble murmuring had increased. This didn't seem to be Sun Jiao...

"Yao Yao?" Jiang Chen asked awkwardly.

"Mhmm..." Yao Yao quietly replied.

Her wet hair exuded a sweet scent of Jasmine, her gossamer of nightgown covered her delicate figure, and the moonlight from the window suffused her flushed face. Her huge, adorable eyes were trembling with apprehension, but there was no sign of retreating.

A silent atmosphere lingered between the two.

Jiang Chen shifted slightly, wanting to subtly move his hand away, only to realize that Yao Yao was clutching on his cuff.

Yao Yao murmured: "I like you."

"Mhmm," He opened his mouth to speak, and despite wanting to say a lot of things, he only managed to utter a single word.

Seeing Jiang Chen didn't react, Yao Yao gently lowered her eyelids, but soon quickly plucked up her courage and lifted her head.

"Could you accompany me for a while to share some secrets?"

"Secrets?"

"Yes, precisely because we're under the sheets that we can tell each other secrets," Yao Yao whispered and nodded her head earnestly.

"You can talk to me about anything," Jiang Chen smiled at her. Instead of removing his hand from her shoulder, he gently smoothened her hair.

Yao Yao guilelessly enjoyed the caress by his big hand as she comfortably closed her adorable, huge eyes and snuggled closer to him.

Due to the close proximity to her delicate body, Jiang Chen's face was suffused with heat.

"That, let's start...first, what kind of girl does Big Brother like?"

Staring into the crystal clear eyes, Jiang Chen held his breath, forgetting to answer the question.

Sensing the mood, a crimson hue crept on Yao Yao's face.

Yao Yao closed her eyes gently.

Her eyelashes gently fluttered, drawing her slightly open small mouth nearer to her beloved Big Brother's lips.

Staring at the approaching face, Jiang Chen's Adam's apple bobbed in his throat.

Reasons told him that if he didn't stop her in this situation,

something bad might happen.

[Stop? Why stop?]

Temporarily forgetting to think, Jiang Chen leaned closer to Yao Yao's lovely face.

A long time ago, he made a decision to follow his thoughts from the bottom of his heart and to stay true to his emotions.

Suddenly, a wisp of cold breeze blew past at the back of his neck.

Cold air?

"Who is it!"

Jiang Chen was instantly alerted and immediately got up to look at the window.

The window was already open, a shadow was hanging upside down in the window.

The long hair swayed in the air, the crystal sandwiched between her two finger reflected an ominous glint under the moonlight.

The corners of her mouth were eerily curved.

...

"Yawn," while walking aimlessly around the base, Sun Jiao yawned, behind her back was an SK10 laser rifle.

The snow was not as heavy as before, and the combat suit fended off the cold air, so it wasn't too chilly.

White mist started to come out of her thick hat as she deliberately looked in the direction of the mansion.

It was already the 37th time that she had done it.

Thinking of that big, bad guy, he was definitely embracing the adorable Yao Yao at this time was and putting that thing that mustn't be described in...

Sun Jiao's face immediately turned red as she stomped her feet in anger.

"Stupid loli lover," Sun Jiao cursed out as she shook her head and continued to wander to other places.

At that time, she suddenly saw two people.

A man and woman were holding hands while walking on the path leading to front of community center.

Despite the distance, Sun Jiao still recognized the identity of the woman. Thus, a complicated expression appeared on her face.

Zhou Xiaoxia, her former friend.

[But she probably couldn't recognize her anymore...] Thinking of this, Sun Jiao let out a sigh.

She had been living in bliss for quite some time to the point of almost forgetting the cruelty of the wasteland.

"I hope you can be happy, my friend."

She looked at the two persons from afar, but she didn't get closer. Instead, she turned around and walked to a different direction.

...

"I am so mad at that she-devil," Lin Lin used a towel to dry her silky silver hair while muttering furiously before leaving the bathroom.

Water droplets dripped on the floor as she dragged her feet slowly inside the cotton slippers.

The cream smeared on her face and hair had been finally rinsed off. She made a relaxing stretch, preparing for a well-deserved sleep tonight.

[Then bear her, I will help you.]

Tingting seemed to have completely mastered the human language.

"Um, it's okay. Um, in my opinion...you shouldn't be this violent, since this is my body after all," Lin Lin muttered softly.

[Are you not annoyed by her?]

Hearing this question, Lin Lin pouted and buried her head under the towel.

"To be honest, not really."

[Is this the Stockholm Syndrome we are talking about?] Tingting queried curiously.

"How is that possible!" Lin Lin exclaimed, infuriated. She punched herself on her left chest, but there was obviously no reaction from Tingting. Rather, it was Lin Lin who got hurt herself.

[Then what is it?]

Lin Lin's pale face was beet red as she rubbed her chest, looking away.

"Perhaps, it is because we are...friends."

It was her first time having this feeling.

She had never experienced the feeling of having friends while she was locked inside the digital cage. Although Sun Jiao would occasionally bully her, she had never disliked her. And that included Jiang Chen...no, that person was different.

The more Lin Lin thought about it, the redder her pretty face became.

The man that rescued her from the virtual world was surprisingly gentle...

BOOM!

There was a sudden loud noise coming from upstairs which interrupted Lin Lin's bewildered musings.

"What are they doing?" Lin Lin blankly stared at the shaking ceiling as red light began to form in her right eye and migrated to her left eye.

"Wait, what are you doing!" Lin Lin gradually lost control of her body as she screamed at the "guest" residing in her body.

Chapter 190: The Otherworldly Crimson Pupils

Boom!

Crystal? Explosion?

The bed there had been broken into two pieces.

With no time to think, Jiang Chen instinctively shielded Yao Yao from being hit.

One of his hand surrounded tightly around Yao Yao's quivering shoulder while he leaned against the half-destroyed bedboard, his other hand took out the PK2000 from the storage dimension.

Tatatata!

With gritted teeth, Jiang Chen held onto the rifle with his finger on the trigger. Yao Yao covered her ears with her hands as her body shook in his arms.

The bullets shattered the window into pieces, but they only managed to break a few strands of the person's hair. The figure agilely dodged all the bullets and dashed into the room.

Bullets chased the quick shadow and left bowl-sized holes in the wall.

The figure didn't seem to be anxious because of the constant firing. Instead, it dashed to the other corner of the room and dragged down the closet along with the wall.

Ka.

The bullets ran out, Jiang Chen flung the rifle to the ground as he pulled out his pistol.

One hand appeared from the shadow and something was thrown out.

Jiang Chen's pupils contracted.

With the help of the moonlight, he saw a crystal emitting a dark green sheen.

There was no time to dodge. He glanced at Yao Yao with the corner of his eyes. Jiang Chen bit the bullet and decided not to start interdimensional travelling. Rather, he reached for the crystal with his hand.

The green sheen lit up the entire room as the scorching temperature almost melted off his skin.

Energy withdraw!

The unstable energy quickly stabilized as the dark green crystal's energy instantly entered the void and turned into a transparent colorless glass.

"Eh?" The opponent was surprised. Just as Jiang Chen didn't understand how she could use the crystal as a grenade, she was also confused as to how Jiang Chen could make the crystal energy disappear.

But being surprised was one thing, the movement of the figure did not stop the slightest as her hand raised up again.

Jiang Chen's face turned green instantly.

It was not one crystal this time, the dark green crystals appeared in the air like raindrops.

Even if he had 10 hands, he could not be able to grab all the crystals!

The crystals scattered everywhere in the room, in such an enclosed space, there was nowhere to dodge.

If he wanted to avoid them, he must use interdimensional travel.

But Yao Yao...

Instantly, thousands of ideas flashed through Jiang Chen's mind,

but none of them contained the thought of abandoning her.

Finally, he gritted his teeth, pushed Yao Yao on the ground as he prepared to take the explosion.

Yao Yao's eyes widened as she looked at her big brother's action in disbelief with her lips quivering. She used her tender hands to forcefully push him, she knew that if big brother was here by himself, he definitely could avoid the explosion.

But Jiang Chen's didn't let go, nor did he activate interdimensional travel, he only gritted his teeth.

"Although it is quite touching, please go die." A female voice full of mockery came from behind the closet. The crystals with sheen began to fall and the dark green energy violently swarmed the room. It could explode any moment.

Beam-!

All the sudden, a blood red beam penetrated through the door and scattered the darkness of the room. It passed the broken window and into the distance.

Under the interference of the blood red particle beam, all the crystals began to gather around the beam like metal dust encountering a magnet, then all the energy was instantly removed as the crystals shattered into clouds of dust.

It was Lin Lin standing at the door!?

But the blood red pupils emitted an unsettling strangeness.

"This is impossible!"

Shouting appeared from behind the fallen closet.

"Nothing is impossible."

Although surprised by the ability displayed by Lin Lin, right now was obviously not the best time to ask the question.

Jiang Chen let Yao Yao go and he quickly leaped toward the side to pick up the rifle.

The person hiding behind the cupboard didn't pause, seeing that the assassination had already failed, she immediately pulled the smoke grenade.

"You must be in your dreams if you think you can escape!"

The nitrogen shield was instantly activated as the turbid air flow scattered the thick smoke.

Jiang Chen carried the rifle to the fallen closet, but he realized that the person was already gone.

The window?

"Eh? What happened?" The crimson light vanished from Lin Lin's eyes as she looked bewilderedly at the room in shambles.

"Lin Lin, look after Yao Yao." Jiang Chen suppressed the anger in his chest as he took a deep breath.

"Eh? But I-"

Jiang Chen quickly took out the kinetic skeleton and put it on, and then with one hand pressed to the window, he jumped straight down.

Both of his feet stomped on the ground with full force as the shock absorber on his legs erased most of the impact.

Although the assassin avoided the patrol of the drones, when she left she still triggered the alarm. The alarm began to ring inside the base as the drone fleet quickly chased after the infiltrated target.

Jiang Chen opened his EP as the escaping target had already been locked by the drones, Jiang Chen quickly moved toward the target.

Even with snow up to his knees, with the assistance of kinetic skeleton, he still didn't feel much resistance as he inched closer and closer to the red dot.

There was a wire tied on the top of the wall, she must have used this rapport to sneak into the base.

With his knees bent, Jiang Chen pushed his feet against the ground as he leaped up and grabbed the edge of the wall with one hand. Jiang Chen somehow managed to jump over the five meters high wall of the base.

The snow-covered street was filled with zombies. When they heard the noise, the blank eyes looked in this direction as their lifeless pupils began to turn red.

"Rawr-!"

With a roar, they dragged their stiff body as the zombies began to surround Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen didn't back down. Instead, he leaped forward. Under the fully mobilized kinetic skeleton, he smashed toward the zombies like a steam train.

The gun barrel smashed through the broken head before the agitated zombies managed to surround him. Jiang Chen quickly dashed through the waves of zombies as he sprang toward an abandoned building outside of the wall.

With both feet on the ground, he vaulted up.

Hands on the edge of the building, Jiang Chen climbed to the roof, leaving the zombies at the bottom. Without slowing down, he chased after the direction of the assassin.

As he jumped between roofs, he was closer and closer to the pitch black figures.

The drones had already surrounded her. The flashing flame in the distance was a signal of the drones firing.

"You can't run, surrender now." Jiang Chen pulled the trigger as he shouted.

The two exchanging gunshots attracted the zombies on the entire street. But without the ability to climb up to buildings. they could only blindly follow the source of the sound.

<Warning: Drones reaching signal limit.>

They had exceeded the attack radius of the Hummingbird drone.

"Dammit, what a rat." Jiang Chen furiously stared at the figure dodging while he leaped at the front building.

Suddenly, that person stopped, turned around, and a mysterious smile appeared.

Jiang Chen was highly alerted by this, but his body was already

in motion and he could not react anymore.

"Bye-bye."

Under the pristine moonlight, he saw the slim-figured woman blowing him a kiss.

"Fu*k!"

Before his feet touched the roof, flame emerged from the bottom of the building and the roof collapsed under the sound of the explosion.

It was explosives.

Heavy smokes filled the vicinity as the debris quickly surrounded him.

The woman looked at Jiang Chen from a distance. Mockery was all over her face as her silky black hair blew in the northern wind.

The black combat suit looked thin, but she did not look chilly at all.

"I thought he was an interesting person, but looks like he is just so-so after all."

She played with the crystal in her hand and threw to the street on the side.

A green sheen flashed as the crystal exploded, the zombies surrounding the shambles were attracted by a new sound source as they confusedly moved to that direction.

"With the cost of 127 crystals, this ability for sure burns through money." Mission ended, the black figure started to mutter to herself as she jumped in front of the shambles.

Not everyone was rich like Jiang Chen, 100 crystals were an astronomical number for most people.

She flung her wrist as the aerodynamic looking laser rifle appeared on her graceful hand.

"Is he buried inside now? This is bothersome." She let out a sigh. The battery buzzed as the laser pistol in her hand was already loaded.

With a kinetic skeleton, he might not have died, Without confirming the body, this mission could not be considered complete.

"As the leader of the force, you chased all by yourself so far out, should I call you courageous or foolish?"

She pressed on her EP as she activated the life detection device.

The signal wave scanned through the map as she tilted her head.

"No signal? Died? Or did he carry a blocking device?"

She kicked away a piece of rock as her gun pointed at the shadows among the ruins, she carefully stepped on top of the shambles.

It began to snow again.

The northern gust covered the already dim moonlight.

But all the sudden, the yet-to-shut-down life detection device on her right hand suddenly showed a red dot flashing on the map. She saw this with the corner of her eyes and she suddenly felt a chillness down to her bones.

She jotted up her head as a black figure growing bigger and bigger reflected in her contracting pupils.

Boom-!

With an abrupt jump backward, she barely dodged the thunderous blow.

Rocks scattered like bullets has hit the surrounding. The arm she used for blocking stung.

The suppressive air flow once again blew away the settled dust, as well as the snow.

One person, one hammer.

The eyes were filled with rage.

If she got any closer, she would have seen the red dot on the pupils.

Fury!

"This is impossible! How did you -" Her eyes were written with disbelief. She obviously didn't know of Jiang Chen's ability to travel through dimensions.

Without a reply, Jiang Chen continued to move.

The micro-engines in his knees kicked into overdrive. Like a cannon, he dragged the long hammer and dashed at her.

She had yet to regain her footing as she could not jump back. Under the crucial situation, the female assassin clenched her teeth and activated the particle shield on her right arm.

The faint blue particles dispersed around to form a circular shield with a radius of one meter around her.

Jiang Chen sneers as the narrowed pupils locked onto her eyes.

The power hammer obtained from the mutated human swung up, with four trails of blue light streams at the end of the hammer, it swung toward the shield in front of her arm like a meteor striking earth.

Chapter 191: The Dark and Windy Night

The particle shield made out of faint blue particles shattered. The power compressed together was instantly released as the female assassin was blown away like a bomb, colliding against a concrete wall 10 meters away.

The sound of fighting drowned the zombies nearby. The frost didn't numb their legs. Compelled by the lust for flesh, they ran toward the two of them.

Under both the kinetic skeleton as well as fury's strength, the power hammer in which the lead mutated human couldn't even lift, was put on Jiang Chen's shield and it was instantly charged again.

Without a skip in a beat, like an enraged monster, he swung the hammer.

A few dark green crystals flew towards him, Jiang Chen didn't avoid it. Instead, the nitrogen armor on his right arm blew the green dots away for meters.

"This lunatic..."The person frantically lifted her pistol and pressed the trigger.

The instant explosive force of laser weapon was perfectly demonstrated in the short distance. The raindrop-like blue beams exploded instantly, outshining the thick snow.

Nitrogen armor could not defend against laser bullets, Jiang Chen put up the hammer to shield his head while the plastic armor layered with scattering effect deflected the 10 low-power laser bullets.

Although the attack didn't manage to cause any hindrance to Jiang Chen's movement, it still forced him to lose his vision on her for a brief second.

With this opportunity, the female assassin quickly jumped towards the side and avoided the thunderous blow.

Boom-!

The concrete wall was smashed into dust as debris flew.

"Roar..." The deep roaring sound filled the air.

The disturbed zombies crowded them as they leapt toward them baring their teeth and claws.

The female assassin sensed the dire situation as she swung her left hand with a metal hook. It shot straight to the top of an apartment building.

Seeing this, Jiang Chen immediately gave up on the hammer as he pulled out the PK2000 behind his back. He fired following her

figure and noise.

The snow made shooting challenging. However, due to Fury and the desire for blood, the bullets managed to chase up to her as if they had eyes.

There were whimpering sounds in the distance. He could sense that he managed to land at least three shots on her.

He swung his gun to smash down a zombie who was leaping towards him. Calmly, Jiang Chen climbed onto the top of the half-destroyed concrete wall as he jumped to the top of the building.

Perhaps it was because her legs were hit, the figure became more awkward and disorientated.

After leaping through two more buildings, Jiang Chen successfully forced her into the corner.

With her back against the wall, the female assassin held onto her bleeding right leg as she stared gravely at the approaching Jiang Chen.

"Looks like there is an error in the information I collected. You are not just a foolish playboy." In a mocking voice, the female assassin said.

"I don't know how you obtained that information." Jiang Chen shrugged.

Fury was deactivated, as his eyes turned clear again.

The landscape near the mansion was relatively flat, there were no tall buildings nor were anything surrounded with high walls. It was nearly impossible to observe the inside of the mansion from outside the base. She could only use the limited amount of information to analyze Jiang Chen's whereabouts.

Jiang Chen was cautious in his mind, this person managed to sneak into the heart of the base, looks like it was necessary to upgrade security,

"Your name?" Jiang Chen stopped five meters away from her with a gun pointed at her head.

The mask covered her face and her nose, Jiang Chen couldn't see her expression clearly.

"Compared to my name, shouldn't you be more worried about your own safety?" The female assassin mocked as a victorious smile appeared on her face.

"Put down your weapon, or you could lose your hand." He had no knowledge that a giant man was standing 10 meters away with a rifle pointed directly at his arm. The killer's face carried a malevolent smile.

Although the plan was to assassinate, it would be better if they

could capture him alive.

[Not working alone?]

Jiang Chen let out a sigh but he didn't put down the weapon. Instead, he glanced at the man standing meters away from him.

"Watch your back." Jiang Chen said mischievously.

The person was suddenly alerted and immediately pressed the trigger.

But the bullet didn't hit anything, because the target disappeared out of thin air!

He promptly turned the gun towards his back, but there was nothing behind him either.

"Be careful-!" Before he could hear the shout, his consciousness was terminated.

Jiang Chen who reappeared at the same place pulled the trigger without hesitation and the bullets penetrated through the back of the assassin's head.

Then, he turned his gun towards the female assassin who was not willing to disclose her name.

White blade reflected light directed at him, Jiang Chen abruptly reposted with his rifle.

Ding!

The dagger cut through the shell of the rifle as the female assassin used this glimpse of opportunity to leap over.

Jiang Chen immediately pulled the trigger, but she was already a body distance away from him. She grabbed on to the burning gun and a second dagger appearing out of the other hand.

Sparks flashed.

Jiang Chen lifted his arm as the kinetic skeleton metal frame attached to the side of his arm shielded against the hit that was aimed straight to his throat.

"Go die!" Letting go of the rifle, Jiang Chen removed the dagger slashed into the gun as he stabbed fiercely toward the female assassin's eyes.

"Not so much." The swinging dagger blocked the hit. She threw away the rifle in her hand as another ping-pong ball sized crystal appeared in her hand.

The crystal emitted a dark green light as fierce and determination flashed across her face. She squeezed out a few words between her teeth, "let's die together."

[Fu*k, what a psychotic woman.]

Cold sweat rolled down his forehead. The continuous use of interdimensional travel consumed almost all the energy there was in the bracelet.

[What do I do?!]

Bang-!

The sound of a gunshot interrupted the fight between the two.

The bullet ripped off half of her arm as the hand holding the crystal fell to the ground.

"Ahhhh!" The agonizing scream almost penetrated Jiang Chen's eardrum as the female assassin that lost her arm tumbled to the back.

Seeing that the assassin had fled, Jiang Chen kicked the dark green crystal away without stopping.

The crystal exploded 10 meters away in mid-air.

Light beamed down from the sky and locked onto the female assassin who was struggling to get up. She held onto her broken left arm with an agonized and frightened expression. Her two

athletic but slim legs spread out on the concrete floor. Because of all the blood, such gesture did not look attractive at all.

With heavy breathing, Jiang Chen threw away the dagger in his hand, he wiped off the cold sweat on his forehead, as he narrowed his eyes to look in the sky.

It was the helicopter, Chu Nan.

...

Chu Nan was piloting the helicopter. After the alarm rang, he, who was taking a stroll outside, immediately headed towards the helicopter pad.

Half-kneeling at the hatch door was Zhou Xiaoxia.

She held a sniper rifle in her hands. Her merciless expression was completely contrary to her usual dumbfoundedness. The cross-sight in her field of vision locked onto the head of the female assassin.

"No need to shoot, just maintain suppression."

Seeing that Jiang Chen was okay, Sun Jiao, who was standing on the side, finally let out a breath of relief as she slowly opened her mouth.

When she heard that assassin broke into the mansion and that Jiang Chen and Yao Yao were attacked, her heart almost jumped out of her throat. Especially when she saw the image from the drones that Jiang Chen chased out alone, she almost burst out crying.

Of course, it was only an expression, Sun Jiao would obviously not cry. She carried the laser rifle and jumped onto the helicopter.

Zhou Xiaoxia didn't respond, her black hair was disheveled because of turbulence, but the hands that were holding onto the sniper rifle were steady.

Sun Jiao looked perplexed from the side of her face and she didn't say anything. She only signaled Chu Nan to lower the helicopter height in order to take Jiang Chen home.

Sun Jiao could imagine the difficulty of sniping on the helicopter, especially with the heavy storm.

With only instinct toward the weapon, she achieved this kind of accuracy?

Sun Jiao began to reminisce about the past when she was active near Liuding town - the not long period of time when they worked together.

"Ahem, commander, maybe you should really "teach" your husband? He is a leader. After all, this type of risky things should

be left for us." Chu Nan left out a sigh as he approached the building.

He maneuvered the helicopter as he said jokingly, "How should I say this? He is not a bad boss."

"Mhmm." Sun Jiao half-heartedly replied. All of her focus was on Jiang Chen.

The helicopter hovered beside the roof.

Before the helicopter stabilized, Sun Jiao immediately jumped to the roof and hugged Jiang Chen.

He held onto the gorgeous figure as he felt her warmth, just as Jiang Chen wanted to say something, his expression turned peculiar.

He tenderly patted her on the back as he let her teeth bite into his shoulder.

"Is your Chinese Zodiac a dog?" Jiang Chen gasped for air in exaggeration.

With her face slightly red, Sun Jiao was embarrassed, but her hands still clenched tightly onto Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen noticed that her eyes were red.

"Sorry for making you worry." Jiang Chen caressed the luscious hair. He looked into the reddened eyes and began to blame himself.

He didn't think too much in the heat of the moment, he only followed because of pure anger.

His hasty move probably disrupted the entire base.

Feeling the girl in his arms calm down, Jiang Chen turned around holding her hand and looked at the already fainted female assassin.

"Let's see the real face of this rat?"

Anger flashed across Sun Jiao's face as her eyes narrowed.

"I agree, for an unwelcomed guest, we must treat her properly."

She already had plans as to how to torture this despicable person.

[Whip, candle... No, these punishments are too light.]

[We will use the cruelest tortures to found out the perpetrator behind this.]

With laser rifle in her hand, Sun Jiao walked up as she kicked off

the mask on the assassin's face without mercy.

"How is this possible!"

Sun Jiao's pupils immediately contracted as she tumbled back a few steps, her face was full of disbelief.

Chapter 192: Sisters

"It has been tuned, but you should be careful when you use it. Since I haven't made one in a long time, actions with high complexity could cause a program error." After tuning the numbers on the computer, Jiang Lin removed the cords on the mechanical arm and gave it to Jiang Chen.

The silica gel feeling was no different than the skin. If the port in the back was not made of metal, it would almost be the same as a woman's hand.

Jiang Chen played with the mechanical hand for a moment and asked casually, "What's the cost to produce one of these?"

"The titanium skeleton is a bit expensive which costs around 31 crystals. The microchip used as processor along with electronic nerve were around 20 crystals in total. To be honest, I recommend purchasing microchips from Liuding town. The chips there are not only cheap, but are also more advanced compared to the Sixth Street. If we use their chips to produce kinetic skeletons, the stats in every category would improve."

"Oh? I'll keep an eye out... Also, did you implant the thing I told you about?"

"Already done, this is the control terminal." Jiang Lin put a thumb-sized memory drive in Jiang Chen's hands.

Jiang Chen picked up the memory drive as he directly inserted it

into the end of the EP before the screen began to load.

"If the user had any malicious intention, the battery would be locked, and it would instantly release power that executes the user... Of course, this power could be adjusted, if you don't want to kill the user right away."

"Mhmm, beautiful... Speaking of this, do you not need to keep an eye on the kinetic skeleton production line?" Jiang Chen stared at the rocket engine in the middle of the room as he asked with an odd expression.

"I have already assigned the responsibilities to everyone and put what they needed to do in a handbook. I am only responsible for quality assurance and tuning, as well as ranking their work performance." Jiang Lin pushed the glasses up his nose and he said proudly.

The ranking was geared towards the newly joined survivors who are better known as the slaves. For those with outstanding work ethics, they would be promoted to lower citizens.

Since it would not interfere with the production, Jiang Chen was too lazy to ridicule him to not stay on task.

"Therefore? How long would this thing stay in orbit for?" Jiang Chen let out a sigh.

"Uhh, this is not an exploration rocket." Jiang Lin scratched his

head.

"Not an exploration rocket?" Jiang Chen was confused.

"Mhmm, precisely speaking, it's a missile capable of carrying 1000 kilograms of combat equipment."

Bang..

The mechanical arm dropped to the ground.

"How many of this can you produce!" Jiang Chen had both of his hands on Jiang Lin's shoulders as he stared at Jiang Lin passionately.

Jiang Lin felt goosebumps all over his back. He took a step back and forced a laugh.

"This thing cannot be mass produced. It's hard to obtain the materials, I can only say I will do my best..."

[What the fu*k, 1000 kilograms of load, even if it carried the ancient TNT, it would instantly evaporate half of a street. If it was switched to the concentrated bomb common on wasteland, its power would be comparable to the mid-sized tactical nuke.]

"Do your absolute best!" Jiang Chen said sincerely.

If he possessed this superweapon, it would without a doubt increase his odd in winning the war against the mutated humans.

Jiang Lin took a deep breath and nodded.

Jiang Chen picked up the mechanical arm off the ground and headed towards the direction of the mansion.

When he entered the basement, he saw the female assassin strapped tightly on top of the operating table, as well as Sun Jia who stood on the side with a perplexed expression.

"The DNA results are out." Lin Lin stretched her body after busily working on the control panels for a long time.

"What's the result!" Sun Jiao tightly clenched onto Lin Lin's shoulders.

Because their faces were so close together, Lin Lin's face turned slightly red and looked away.

"She is indeed your younger sister."

When she heard the confirmation, Sun Jiao's shoulder began to slacken. Jiang Chen noticed the perplexed expression on her face, he sighed, walked to her and hugged her around the shoulder.

"I'll spare her-"

"No, she almost killed you and Yao Yao." Sun Jiao had determination in her eyes, but it was soon replaced with blankness.

On one side laid the only relative she had in the world. On the other side stood the person she loves.

"I don't want to make this difficult for you."

"But-"

"Leave it to me. Trust me." Jiang Chen stared at her shaking eyes as he said with an assertive tone.

With a blushed face, Sun Jiao lowered her head.

"Then I'll leave it to you..." As she finished speaking, Sun Jiao pushed opened the door and left the basement.

Although she had thought of the countless of cruel ways to extract information from the assassin, when she realized that the assassin was actually her sister, she was no longer certain.

To find her lost sister, she had covered the entire Wanghai city with her footsteps. It was until she finally met Jiang Chen did she temporarily put a pause to the journey of searching for her family.

If she stayed here, Jiang Chen must feel restrained because he has to consider her feeling.

Sun Jiao, who already knew the meaning of tenderness, didn't want him to feel conflicted.

So she chose to leave.

Seeing Sun Jiao's back, Jiang Chen sighed.

"This is problematic."

The assassin was the female boss' sister. Could the plot get any more stereotypical than this?

"How about you take her as part of your collection as well, since your prey limit is anyone within 10 years both ways." Lin Lin suggested.

The joke was not made at the best time.

Jiang Chen narrowed his eyes.

Lin Lin frightenedly trembled and lifted her hands to cover her mouth.

"How did she make the crystals explode, did you figure it out?"

Under a normal circumstance, the energy in the crystal is very stable. Even in a high-temperature and high-pressure environment, it would not explode. The crystals could even be cut into smaller pieces, hence why it could be used as a currency.

"Based on DNA analysis, she could freely change her brain wave pattern. It is likely that she changed her brain wave pattern to coincide with a special particle chain within the crystals, which resulted in resonance. Through experimental analysis, once the particle chain is disrupted, the entire crystal structure would collapse which would instantly release all the energy. This should be an ability that evolved from genetic vaccine. Also, about the crystal-"

Lin Lin seemed to have made a new discovery, but Jiang Chen didn't have the mood to be thinking about other things.

"Mhmm, I see, go back first, I'll find you later." He interrupted and ordered in an undertone.

"Eh? Do you not need my help anymore?"

"Because the things happening next might not be PG." Jiang Chen shrugged his shoulder.

Lin Lin's face turned red as she cursed out whiling walking out in quick steps carrying her tablet.

"Pervert..."

Jiang Chen ignored Lin Lin's bad mouthing as he quietly waited for her footsteps to disappear.

He closed and locked the basement door, took a deep breath and walked to the female assassin.

Sun Xiaorou, that was her name.

If one carefully studies at her face, one would discover that her looks did resemble Sun Jiao.

As for the differences, it was mainly that the assassin was shorter in height . She was also not as busty compared to her sister and her face still carried a hint of immaturity. The broken hand was sprayed with medicine mist and bandaged up. Her limbs were locked onto the operating table with all four extended out. Her black combat suit was changed into loose white shirt and pants. Just by judging her current appearance alone, it was hard to imagine her as an assassin.

He shook his head as he walked beside the operating table. Looking at the buttons with many unknown functions, he paused for a moment before randomly pressing down a button.

"Ahhhhh!" The scream almost pierced through his eardrums. Jiang Chen had to cover his ears.

Sun Xiaorou violently shook as her eyes turned white and foam was dripping out of her mouth.

A faint pungence appeared, Jiang Chen looked at the light yellow liquid dripping along the operating table and an awkward expression appeared on his face.

He only wanted to startle her and wake her up.

He didn't think that the button was for electrocuting.

[But what are the purposes of the other buttons?]

Chapter 193: Punishment

Sun Xiaorao woke up from her paralyzed state.

She stared fiercely at Jiang Chen, then her eyes began to wander around the basement.

"Don't bother, there is not a single crystal in this basement." Jiang Chen smiled.

"What did you do to me?" Sun Xiaorou quickly scanned her clothes. When she realized her black combat suit had been changed, anger appeared between her eyebrows, but the smile he had was no different.

"Your name is Sun Xiaorou."

Sun Xiaorou paused for a moment. She then looked at Jiang Chen in alert without making a sound. She was confused as to how this man knew her name.

[Looks like she haven't seen Sun Jiao yet...]

"Where are you from? Why are you assassinating me?" Jiang Chen grabbed a chair and sat beside the operating table.

A determined and scornful laugh came out of her mouth and she said mockingly. "You really think I am going to tell you?"

"How would I know without trying? If possible, I would prefer if you don't make me do cruel things to beauties." Jiang Chen shrugged.

"Oh? If it is just the electrocuting, you are far away from getting anything." Sun Xiaorou mocked.

She had already been mentally prepared about the consequence of being captured.

"Have you been implanted with the chip?" Jiang Chen didn't get enraged by her tone. Instead, he asked with the calm voice.

"Only foolish people would be happy about those boring dog chains." The voice was contemptuous.

She was not forced by the slavery chip.

Sun Jiao was her only family, then this eliminated the possibility of her family being taken hostage.

An absolute form of loyalty?

Hard to believe, especially on the wasteland without orders.

"Do you have a sister?" Jiang Chen asked the question attentively.

Her expression did not change the slightest.

"I don't have family."

Jiang Chen wondered if Sun Jiao would be heartbroken after these words, her sister already couldn't remember her.

For the people injected with the genetic vaccine, the truth-telling liquid is ineffective. If he wanted to obtain information, then it must be interrogation with the help of a lie detector. Seeing her defiant stance, Jiang Chen was troubled.

Sun Jiao's sister... Based on relationship, she should be considered his sister-in-law.

From any perspective, using torture on an assassin was the best choice to obtain useful information. But Jiang Chen could not do that to his sister-in-law.

"Then let's make a deal. If you cooperate, I can let you go, and give you ten thousand crystals." Jiang Chen decided to first lure her with money.

To his surprise, her stubbornness matched her sister's.

"Crystals? You don't understand what this is about at all." The voice was filled with arrogance and contempt.

"Oh? Don't you use crystals as a currency?" Jiang Chen tried to make a conversation.

"Ignorant."

Still, the tone was filled with mockery.

Jiang Chen was instantly enraged, but his face was expressionless. He only grabbed a long needle injector from the pan beside the operating table.

"Do you know what this is?" Jiang Chen shook the needle in front of her nose as he said slowly.

"What?" Sun Xiaorou held her neck up as she scorned.

"Nerve catalyst, it would increase your nerve cell activity by one hundred times. In simple words, it could increase your sensitivity one hundred times." Jiang Chen lightly pushed the needle as the colorless liquid emerged from the tip.

"You are a devil." Sun Xiaorou's expression changed as she tried to move back, but because of her tied down limbs, her struggle was futile.

"I don't have time to waste on you. The mutated humans are across the river bank and my people are waiting for my order. You

only have two choices right now, be truthful, or be tortured until you tell the truth." Jiang Chen said in menace.

This medicine was purchased by Zhou Guoping at the Sixth Street black market. Five milliliter of liquid cost one hundred crystals, which signified its rarity.

"Then why don't you try!" Pew!

Jiang Chen dodged her spit. He was not angry. Instead, he laughed as he injected the needle right into her vein.

Looking into her eyes of despair, he pushed all the liquid into her.

Her limbs twitched as if she was having a spasm, then her body began to quiver. It took her a long time before she breathing returned to normal.

"You, you filth of a human being..."

"Do you not have the energy to speak?" Jiang Chen threw the needle away as a smirk emerged on his face.

"..." Her voice was trembling so much Jiang Chen could not make out what she was cursing about.

If possible, he didn't want to do this, but since it already started,

then it must continue.

He pressed his finger onto her right arm.

"Wooo!"

"Are you sensitive to this extreme? Then let me ask you-"

"In, in your dreams..."

"Okay, then imagine what happened today as a bad dream. Next, what should we try? Electrocution? Or high-temperature SPA? Or something else?" Jiang Chen pressed a red button.

"Ahhhhh-!"

The agonizing scream revibrated in the entire basement.

Lin Lin, with one ear on the door, shivered and she quickly retracted her head.

[What was this pervert doing!]

Because of curiosity, when Jiang Chen closed the door, she quietly sneaked back.

But just as she put her ear against the door, she heard the

agonizing scream.

She remembered the words she spoke that provoked Jiang Chen as she shuddered again before carefully leaving the basement.

...

Looking at Sun Xiaorou with foams in her mouth, both eyes turning white, and her limbs spasming on the operating table, Jiang Chen rubbed his wary temples.

Even after the injection of medicine that increased her sensitivity by one hundred times, she still lasted two hours.

Seeing the stains at the edge of the operating table, Jiang Chen held his breath and his expression was somewhat awkward.

[This seems to be over the line?]

But he couldn't think of better ways. In the end, he didn't hurt his body, as to the mental trauma... let time work its magic.

Another note worth mentioning, he didn't expect her to be a virgin.

Jiang Chen picked up the notebook and hastily left the basement.

At the door, he met Sun Jiao with a perplexed expression.

"Is it over?"

"Mhmm." Jiang Chen nodded awkwardly.

Sun Jiao didn't say anything and kissed him.

Jiang Chen blankly looked at Sun Jiao's closed eyes before he shut his eyes as well.

Lips apart.

"Sorry, I-"

"Don't apologize, she deserves the punishment. Regardless of where it happens, the fate of assassins is public execution... I am already thankful that you spared her life. The damage on her body could be healed with time-" Sun Jiao seemed to have thought this through as there was no more hesitation in her eyes.

"No, I didn't hurt her during the process. But she provoked me, I turned hot-headed, and then I..." As he spoke, Jiang Chen's expression turned more and more awkward.

Sun Jiao paused for a moment, then her face turned red and she gently bit her lips.

"Pervert." Sun Jiao smashed his shoulder and she quickly walked downstairs.

Seeing Sun Jiao's figure, Jiang Chen put up his hand wanting to explain something, but then he put it down.

There was no use in explaining once the girl sees the chaos in the basement.

He will have to wait until the night to explain to her "privately."

Perhaps, this was the vilest thing he has done in his entire life.

Chapter 194: Klein Particles

The Northern Alliance Area.

As one of the rare safe havens inside Pan-Pacific area, the description of this place was only applicable when compared to the ruins and shambles.

The survivors left on this wasteland migrated north as they established a survivor camp along the Yellow River South of the Golden City. The population density of this area was not high before the war. Therefore, the concentration of zombies was naturally low. Without the direct impact of a nuclear weapon, the radiation level was much lower compared to developed area. The mutant population was also meager. Other than the mutants that migrated from north of the Golden city, this place possessed almost no lethal danger.

Stability brought order and prosperity.

Despite the harsh environment and the barren lands, they still manage to plot out thousands of acres of "arable land" on the wasteland. Despite the low production, it ultimately managed to feed the tens of thousands of survivors who fled here.

Dictatorship, power, stability.

These three words could holistically describe this "empire."

Although it was named as the Northern Alliance, the armed force that controlled the "security" of this place of land controlled the life of all the survivors. In the form of military government, they managed the food production and subsequently dictated the entire area.

It was rumored that they had been plotting against Wanghai city for a long time already.

Of course, Sun Xiaorou didn't belong to the military government, but rather a religious group based on the northern area - the Dusk Church.

They promoted the forthcoming of an apocalypse and fully believed the terror of the apocalypse. But different from the majority of people who lost hope, they also firmly believed that their spiritual leader Bo Yu could lead them to escape the solar system, find a second Sun and establish a new home for the humans.

It was quite a coincidence, the purpose of their trip to Wanghai city was to obtain the <Project Garden of Eden> buried in Fallout Shelter 005 and to acquire the technology to establish the biosphere in space.

To be able to enter the planning bureau inside the city and obtain the exact location of Fallout Shelter 005, they were not reluctant to partner up with the mutated humans from the Seventh Area. All the firearms of the mutated human, as well as the security password of the Carman Corporation, were provided by them.

But unfortunately, their fate was determined and they were to return empty-handed. Other than metal debris, there was nothing left there. After clearing out the mutated creature that infiltrated Fallout Shelter 005, Jiang Chen blew up the server of the article intelligence and cleaned out anything useful inside.

As for the metal box that stored <Project Garden of Eden>, after Lin Lin copied all the information to the chip inside her head, Jiang Chen destroyed the original copy.

Jiang Chen wondered what kind of expression would be on Bo Yu's face once he went through all the trouble to finally enter to Fallout Shelter 005, and only found junks inside.

But regardless, even if Jiang Chen knew what happened to Fallout Shelter 005, he could not stand in front him and say "I already cleared Fallout Shelter 005 and I have taken everything away."

In this case, conflict was inevitable. Jiang Chen could not let the mutated humans inside Qingpu. The leader of The Dusk Church Bo Yu would not give up on entering the city center. When he sent the assassin, he already demonstrated his hostility.

As to how the weapons and supplies would be transported to Wanghai, and how she joined The Dusk, Sun Xiaorou didn't have those memories. Since she joined the cult at a very young age and based on the fact that all religions have the same tendencies, brainwashing was an unavoidable step.

After all, it was about the crystals.

In the end, Sun Xiaorou, in her half-unconscious state, blurted out random things. After attempting to piece together her broken sentences, Jiang Chen could not summarize the information she said.

But a keyword she continuously emphasized drew his attention.

Klein Particles.

It was the third time he has heard this word.

...

"Ahhhh!"

Just as he pushed open Lin Lin's door, Jiang Chen heard a sudden whimper.

He looked confusedly at the quivering Lin Lin.

"What happened to you?"

"No...Nothing!"

The sharp voice seemed to be out of tune.

Was she traumatized somehow?

Due to Lin Lin being regularly irregular, Jiang Chen wasn't bothered by it and he cut straight to the topic.

"About what happened last time, I have a question."

Lin Lin cutely gulped as she nodded her head intensely.

It was rare that she was this cooperative.

Usually, she would start with, "Why do I have to help you?".

Jiang Chen obviously didn't know that the disobedient Lin Lin sneaked back when he closed the door and heard some bad things.

"...Then I am going to ask, last time, it was Tingting that shot out the red light?"

Jiang Chen's expression was weird when he said the name Tingting.

Although in that virtual world, she entered it in the form of a human and became a couple with him, her original form is a "bug."

"Mhmm!" Lin Lin nodded furiously.

"That particle, what exactly is it?"

When she heard this, Lin Lin's expression turned earnest.

"That's what I wanted to say... I found something abnormal on the surface of the crystal."

As she finished saying, Lin Lin ran to the front of the experiment table. She picked up a polished crystal and put it inside the glass sphere of an odd-looking equipment.

"This is...?"

"You won't know even if I tell you, it is a really convenient equipment... Before I always thought you guys collected them because they were shiny and that because they could also replace hydrocarbon as an energy source. But after doing some experiments, this thing is not as simple as it looks."

Inside the glass sphere, the dark green crystal began to change color.

"The complete combustion of the energy of a crystal could release the energy equivalent to 2.47 kg of coal. After, it would turn into this form."

The crystal lost its shine and changed into a quartz-like appearance.

"And then?" Jiang Chen looked at the crystal keenly.

Lin Lin didn't answer Jiang Chen's question. Instead, she asked rhetorically with mysteriousness on her face, "Have you heard of the fourth dimension?"

"Fourth dimension? The dimension that includes time?" Jiang Chen had heard this before as he had been through university after all.

"Then let me ask you another question, have you heard about energy that belongs to the fourth dimension?"

Jiang Chen was dumbfounded. One because it was too abstract, two because he didn't know why she suddenly brought up the question.

"Every matter in this world, including you and me, could be measured by three measurements: length, width and height. These are all measurements of the third dimension. But if time is added to the list, then the Jiang Chen today would be completely different from the Jiang Chen tomorrow. This would be the fourth dimension. The same as the 1.50 m Lin Lin is completely different than the 2.00 m Lin Lin in the third dimension."

"If we can add a timeline to energy. Imagine this, the crystal's

"energy today" have been used, but a few thousand years later, its energy would be filled up again..."

"Wait, what about the conservation of energy?" Jiang Chen had to interrupt.

"Of course it is conserved. Because from the start, the Klein particle exists in the forth dimension, but it is limited to a "point" that we can't see. But at a certain time point, some Klein particles would fall to the third dimension, in our eyes, the most obvious demonstration would be 'energized.'"

Because it was too scientifically fictional, despite Lin Lin being extremely slow and detailed in her description, Jiang Chen still felt lost.

"You can try this crystal, use your power to draw its energy. Remember, the energy amount of this crystal before was five." As she spoke, Lin Lin put the colorless crystal in Jiang Chen's hand.

It was already empty.

Charging the interdimensional bracelet with it would be impossible?

As he thought this through, Jiang Chen still followed Lin Lin's instruction and put the crystal in his hand.

Then, his expression turned to astonishment.

He somehow obtained energy from the empty crystal.

The amount of energy that supplied the bracelet was no less than the crystal with five energy points!

"Is there energy remaining?" Jiang Chen asked in disbelief.

Lin Lin shook her head.

"The energy belonging to the third dimension has been completely exhausted. You could bring this crystal to any production equipment and it could not be used as a source of energy. But just as I had suspected, your interdimensional bracelet could directly draw Klein particles from the fourth dimension. Another way to say this is that you exhausted the energy that could appear in the crystal in the future."

Jiang Chen's eyes widened as he stared at his right wrist, the tattoo.

"No, it could also draw electricity to charge it. It would cost 100 watts of electricity to charge it to full, with crystal, it would only cost 10 energy points. But based on your explanation, one energy crystal, with the energy fallen to the third dimension was equivalent to 2.47 kilograms of coal. 10 energy points of crystal Klein Particles must at least exceed 100 watts of electricity by 10 folds?"

Lin Lin sighed.

"Think carefully, when you use electricity to charge interdimensional bracelet, did electricity follow your hand to go into the ground?"

Jiang Chen tightened his eyebrows as he recollected when he charged before, he shook his head.

"No."

"Of course not. If that happened, you would be fried." Lin Lin said in frustration.

"The electricity absorbed by your bracelet is not the electricity generated through electron flowing from the negative end to positive end, but rather it completely consumed the electron itself. It is complicated to explain, but you could interpret it as the particle has completed vanished. Therefore, you wouldn't think that with only 100 watts of electricity, it could manage to travel through space dimensions?" In the end, Lin Lin ridiculed.

"Therefore, crystal... This type of biological formation, is a container for Klein particles?"

"That's right. As to how exactly it contained the mysterious Klein particle, I haven't figured it out yet. But crystal is not as simple as it appears to be. Including the female assassin detonating the crystal, as well as the red beam shot up by Tingting, they are all

phenomenon of Klein particles releasing its energy to the third dimension." Lin Lin explained with an earnest face.

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Chapter 195: The Unpeaceful Sixth Street

The unrest that happened overnight had been settled.

The assassin was caught and captured in the mansion's basement. The boss was free of harm and everyone let out a sigh of relief.

Hearing that assassin sneaked into the base, Cheng Weiguo, who was responsible for the security of the base, immediately lectured and cursed the soldiers patrolling on the wall. He pulled the knight emblems off of their chest and ordered them to kneel in the snow naked for an entire day as punishment.

In this type of weather, to kneel in the snow for an entire day, even with the genetic vaccine, they would lose their life.

But Jiang Chen spared them with his words.

It was not their fault.

Being able to avoid the drones equipped with the infrared sensor, the assassin must be skillful. Through his combat with Sun Xiaorou, Jiang Chen discovered that she was not to be underestimated.

Because of the existence of a powerful enemy, punishing their own just to release anger was no doubt a foolish move. Although Jiang Chen didn't understand the crafts of leading people, he still

could think wearing others' shoes.

"This humiliation will be washed away by your future achievement. If you really feel guilty, then use your loyalty to repay, not your life."

Jiang Chen said to the humiliated "naked knights" who were kneeling on the ground.

Although he spared the patrolling soldiers, the topic of base security was the conversation around the table again.

How to maximize the resource available to increase the effectiveness of patrol? Jiang Chen suggested a brutal but straightforward idea.

Bulldoze all the buildings within one hundred meter radius outside of the base to clear out the area.

They would reuse the construction materials as much as possible, if they couldn't, then they would drag one hundred meters out and pile it up.

Without buildings to take cover, it would not be as easy to infiltrate the base under the dual surveillance of drones and patrols.

This issue was finally resolved.

...

The bedroom wall was disfigured by the bullets and required renovation. Therefore, Jiang Chen had to choose a different room to sleep.

But Sun Jiao already made the decision for him as she dragged him into her own bedroom. She was ready to use her own body to "interrogate" him to see what exactly he did to her sister.

Of course, there was no sense of blame.

However, the fact that her man slept with her own sister made the possessive Miss Sun Jiao displeased.

The result of a displeased Sun Jiao was that Jiang Chen had to stay up tonight...

The only pitiful person was Yao Yao.

After she recovered from the shock, the small loli worked up the courage to suggest that if he had nowhere to stay, he could stay with Yao Yao. But sister Sun Jiao was one step ahead so Yao Yao could only pout at the closed door in disappointment.

The next morning, Jiang Chen bumped into Yao Yao, who, just like him, also had dark circles.

Feeling guilty over the fact that he didn't manage to fulfill his promise, Jiang Chen suggested a compensation plan - to stay with her for the entire day.

"Am I really not heavy?" Yao Yao turned around asking worriedly.

"Not heavy, Yao Yao, you are really light." Jiang Chen quickly shook his head.

A timid smile appeared on Yao Yao's face and she happily turned to look in the front. She dangled her feet in the air while moving her tiny butt backward to sit in a more comfortable position.

But this troubled Jiang Chen.

It was not the weight, but the tender feeling scratching on his legs had touched an indescribable place.

To simply describe the state between these two people...

Inside the bedroom of a girl, Jiang Chen sat on the side of the soft bed, and Yao Yao sat on his legs.

He took a deep breath as he tried his hardest to suppress the part of him from raising up. It would be awkward if it "stood up".

But a faint fragrance entered his nostril because of his deep breath.

The tip of his head felt a tingling sensation.

Uh Oh!

Maybe it was because she felt something hard, or sensed Jiang Chen's "trouble," Yao Yao's face began to turn red.

"Big brother, you don't need to endure this..."

As she said that, Yao Yao buried her tiny head and silently putting her tablet down. Her feet also stopped dangling. The long shaking eyelashes seemed to be waiting for something.

[No, it's better to endure.]

After an arduous internal conflict, Jiang Chen finally suppressed his desire and he decided not to put his claws on Yao Yao.

Seeing that Jiang Chen made no moves, Yao Yao pouted her mouth but didn't say anything as she continued to research on her tablet.

Jiang Chen let out a relief as he glanced at the dazzling amount of information on the tablet. The hiddenly shocked Jiang Chen also picked up his own tablet off the table and began to take care of his

own business.

There was a large discrepancy of force at the front line. Based on the information provided by Zhao Gang, it is expected that after 20 days, the mutated human force would be ready to attack. When that happens, the river below the Zhufeng Highway bridge would be frozen. The mutated humans would launch their attack at that time.

On the screen was a visual sent back from the Hummingbird drone. Because of the existence of an anti-air machine gun, the task of capturing video footage could not be given to Chu Nan.

The dense red dots accumulated behind the snow hill on the side of the highway, as well as the anti-air machine guns and cannons covered in white cloths.

[If Jiang Lin's missile is completed, it would only take one hit to achieve what I want...] Jiang Chen fantasized in his head but quickly shook his head. He then called Zhou Guoping from the Sixth Street.

The phone was quickly picked up.

Zhou Guoping's bald head appeared on the screen.

"Hello? Boss. Do you need me to do something?" The respectful voice lightened his mood.

"I need mercenaries, do you know any you are familiar with at Sixth Street?" Jiang Chen cut straight to the topic.

"Mercenaries?" Zhou Guoping paused for a moment, "Do you know already, boss?"

"Know?" Jiang Chen's expression was odd, he didn't understand what Zhou Guoping said.

"Mhmm, there is a rumor recently on Sixth Street. It said that the wreckages of 'God's Cane' lie inside somewhere in the city center. Of course, the validity of the information has yet to be confirmed, I am still investigating. If, boss, you are also interested that thing, I can help you investigate carefully." Zhou Guoping said mysteriously.

"The God's Cane?" Jiang Chen was lost, just as he was about to ask what it was, he suddenly recalled the <Colonel's Diary> he read in the virtual world.

"Oh, I almost forgot that you are not from Wanghai." Zhou Guoping slapped his forehead as he quickly explained, "It's a sky based weapon, also known as an orbital weapon-"

"Mhmm, I know, but what does that have to do with the Sixth Street?" Jiang Chen interrupted Zhou Guoping's explanation, he only wanted to listen to critical information.

"A mysterious wealthy man sent out quests at major bars and set

a reward of one million crystals for the wreckage of God's Cane."

"One million crystals? Fu*k, is that person crazy?" Jiang Chen almost jumped up.

Yao Yao looked at Jiang Chen in confusion. She moved her butt as she readjusted the way she sat.

"Ahem, the amount has been verified by Sixth Street officials. The quest had been stamped with the metal seal. With Sixth Street's official reputation, this quest shouldn't be fraudulent." Zhou Guopign took a moment he continued, "The mercenaries stationed in the Sixth Street have gone insane. There are fewer missions in the winter as all of those people like to spend their days rotting away in the bars. Now someone offered such an astronomical number, even the not-so-strong hunting teams began to make moves."

Jiang Chen's eyebrows furrowed.

"So you are saying, it's hard to hire people now?"

"I wouldn't say it is hard, but the price is definitely higher."

"That's okay, I'll send you the mission... Also, regarding the God's Cane, keep an eye out for me."

"Yes, boss." Zhou Guoping exaggeratedly bowed.

Jiang Chen closed the communication menu and rubbed his nose.

He had an ominous feeling.

The snow this year would be much colder compared to the years before.

Chapter 196: Mercenaries

Snow, as thick as a blanket, covered the desolated street.

Other than the worker removing snow, the only noise on the entire street was the freezing northern wind.

Oh, not quite. There was still one place that maintained the liveliness of spring.

People shouted, celebrated, unleashed their pressure, and spent away their dreary days.

This place was the Fake Leg Bar. Although they have only been open for less than one month, the high-quality alcohol garnered the hearts of all the survivors. In front of the bar counter, the muscular mercenary had a foot on the chair as he showed off his scars drunkenly. The barely covered lady walked among the dark corners of the bar to wait for the prey of the night. Gamblers put two tables together as they played poker and dices.

Just based on these few people, this place would appear as no different than the Bullet Shell Bar on the next street. The only difference was, the security here was top notch - to the point of unbelievable. But, it was not like this when the bar just opened.

Alcohol was a lucrative industry regardless of the geographic location. The existence of Fake Leg Bar, without a doubt, ended the reign of bars on the entire street. When people tried the beer with the sweet wheat aroma, no one would be interested in the stuff

made with industrial alcohol. Even the wealthy in the inner circle would occasionally drop by to have a drink or two.

The high profitability naturally drew the jealousy of competitors. When threatening didn't work, the owner of each bar used all kinds of despicable techniques.

Fights, theft, even blackmail.

But those who used these techniques obviously underestimated Zhou Guoping's ability. His profession was a bandit. In terms of despicable techniques, he was the master of all.

Bribery, assassination, and vandalism.

After chopping down six dirty overreaching hands consecutively, the people looking for trouble finally became cautious. Immediately, he spread out a rumor that the boss of the store had a special connection with Council of Ten members. After hearing the news, people were still hesitating if they should take the risk and finally give up the ill-intentions in their mind. They wondered if they should just accept the fact that Fake Leg Bar dominated the market.

Other than great security, the design of the bar was also customer friendly. The second and third floor were renovated into rooms, providing privacy for the males and females that needed their own space and to provide the wary survivors a place to release their deep level of stress.

Like usual, Zhou Guoping wore a grey suit. He casually sat at a wooden table as he chatted with the mercenaries that wandered the wasteland. The talkative boss garnered the friendliness from the mercenaries. Even his bald head became a bright spot for this bar.

Just like the grandpa in KFC.

As to why. It was because if someone talked about something interesting, he would put out a tab that drinks would be on the house.

"And at the northern area of city center, guess what I saw? I saw a Mother of Death Claw! Dammit, I thought it was just a nuclear crater, so I wanted to see if there was anything worthy inside."

"Ok, buddy, Mother of Death Claw would only return to nuclear crater when they give birth. In the winter, they would usually hide in a cave, you are bullshitting too much." A middle-aged man smiled, he took the cigar out of his mouth, shook it in the dust tray. His face had a frightening scar that stretched from his left eye to the right tip of his mouth. Because of this scar, his smile looked daunting.

"If the one-eyed Lev said that, then it must be."

"That's right, buddy, the scar on this old fellow's face was left by the Mother of Death Claw."

The young man turned red. He took a big gulp of the beer to disguise the embarrassment.

Zhou Guoping looked at the chatting mercenaries with a smile. But he was planning in this mind as to when he should speak, and who he should hire.

The young man should be new to the scene, at least he didn't look like he was in the profession before. As to the Slavic middle-aged man, he must be a character. It was rumored that he was a fighter jet pilot for CCCP. He didn't get sent back after the war. Instead, he was taken to Wanghai as the special experiment test subject. When the apocalypse happened, he used his impeccable skills to escape from the lab before he started to wander on the wasteland.

But Zhou Guopign didn't plant to hire him. Regardless of how powerful he was, he was only a lone traveler. The boss' instruction was that he needed a lot of people, a team at least the size of 50 people.

It was difficult, especially in the environment where everyone was plotting for the city center.

But the boss's order is absolute, Zhou Guoping's eyes continually glanced at the door. He was waiting for a person to show up.

The oak door was pushed open as a gust of cold wind mixed with ice shards blew inside.

The man drinking beside the door shivered because of the wind. Just as he was about the curse at the person who opened the door, he saw the person's face clearly and the swear that was about to burst out of him was swallowed down.

Buzzcut, grey winter suit, he looked rather ordinary. When he stepped into the bar, he was not rowdy like most people. Instead, he sat at the counter with a low profile and ordered a beer.

But when Zhuo Guopin saw the person, his eyes immediately lit up and walked over with a smile.

It was Luo Yang, the leader of the Black Blood Mercenaries. Although he had an ordinary face, he possessed an ability that is not to be underestimated by anyone. On top of that, he had the abilities of the 70 warriors who fight for him.

"How's the reward today?" Zhou Guoping sat beside him and used a casual tone to chat with him.

"Terrible, other than snow, there was blood. The northern part of the city center has been completely explored. A zombie nest was even cleared out and there were no signs of the satellite wreckage at all." Luo Yang took a sip of his drink as he warily rubbed his head.

"Nothing at all?"

"Basically, only when you enter the city center would you start to

have some respect for the dumb zombies. It was so dense, and you couldn't see the end. Our truck milled through the crowd and fired fiercely into the herds of zombies. Even then, we were almost stuck there twice."

"Have an open mind, buddy. Since that is the world of zombies, even Death Claw would have to avoid there." Zhuo Guoping comforted him as he took out a pack of cigarette and handed one to him.

Luo Yang let out a sigh and lit one for himself.

"Has there been any good missions recently?"

"You give up on the 'one million reward' mission?" Zhuo Guoping cracked a smile.

"I can't use my brothers' life to take the risk. I have a feeling that it would be a pit without a bottom. It can't be filled regardless of how many lives were shed." When he heard one million crystals, greed radiated through Luo Yang's eyes, but it was quickly replaced by a grave concern.

Compared to his colleagues that dove into city center like flies, he maintained some rationality.

"Let's talk about something happy. I happen to have a mission."

"How much money?" He took a sip as Luo Yang said quite

curiously.

"Ten thousand crystals."

"What!" Luo Yang spat the beer out. He looked at Zhuo Guoping with eyes widened, "Ten thousand? Are you sure?"

"I am certain." Zhou Guoping nodded his head with eyes narrowed.

"What's the mission ?" Luo Yang wiped his mouth as he said cautiously.

"Have you heard the Fishbone base?" Zhuo Guoping said nonchalantly.

"I have heard a thing or two. An external force's base stationed in Wanghai with quite a powerful force."

Because the trades with Zhao Corporation were conducted secretly, Zhou Guoping didn't reveal the boss behind this bar. So, to the outside, the Fishbone base was a mystery. Most of the people only knew that there was a base in Qingpu, but even the exact location was unknown.

As to why it was obvious, there were a countless number of survivor camps on the wasteland, but most were unfriendly. For example, the Huizhong Mercenaries were already wiped out.

"The hirer is their boss. As for the mission, it is on here."

As he spoke, Zhou Guoping took out a sheet of paper and put it on the counter.

After wavering for a moment, Luo Yang picked up the contract. He scanned the paper and his expression turned more and more stern.

"This is impossible! What kind of joke is this? Stopping the mutated humans from Seventh area at Taifu river... This is asking my men to die."

"Is that the case? If you think that way, then it is okay, although I personally think it is a pity to give it up." Zhou Guoping sighed, pretending to feel pitiful as he took back the contract.

"I don't see where the pity is coming from. You have to have your life to spend money." Luo Yang laughed.

"Do you think the Fishbone base will lose ?" Zhou Guoping asked with a smile.

"Based on what I know, there are three thousand something mutated humans at the Seventh area, although they might not be the smartest, they are natural warriors." Luo Yang said. "Even if they only bring half of the people, it would be at least fifteen hundred people. A soldier discrepancy of more than ten times,

only a dumbas*s would accept this mission. Mutated humans would squash them like ants."

Luo Yang took a big chug as he shook his head in disappointment.

He obviously was not disappointed at the fate of the Fishbone base, but rather he was sad over the ten thousand crystals that slipped away before his own eyes.

"But based on my information, the Fishbone base has quite a powerful force, such as heavy firearms." Zhou Guoping smiled.

"Heavy firearms? Haha." Luo Yang scorned, he didn't agree.

He knew a few tactics of mutated humans.

The mutated humans occupying the steel factory at the Seventh area used steel almost lavishly. With their pure muscle strength, they could carry the thick C-Grade steel armor to take charge, it was a nightmare for all light infantries.

Heavy firearms? Okay, it was effective. But when all the mutated humans spread out and charge over the wide frozen river, how many shots would the cannons manage to fire? Once the mutated humans pass through the line of defense, no firearms would be useful and the subsequent battle will likely become a one-sided slaughter.

"As for the exact fighting tactics, as the middleman, I am not sure. But in your opinion, if they have an external force, without a certain confidence in victory, would they fight to the death for Qingpu?"

"Regardless if they have confidence or not, for us, the risk is too high." Luo Yang shook his head.

"But risk and reward is proportional, isn't that right? Or you wouldn't be taking your men into the city center."

Luo Yang's expression was rather awkward when he heard those words.

Seeing this, Zhuo Guoping paused and lowered his voice.

"I have a piece of information here, are you interested?"

Luo Yang saw the mysteriousness of Zhuo Guoping and his expression turned serious, waiting for him to finish.

"Other than this ten thousand crystals, there is also another perk. I can release the information to you, but do understand that it is against the rules. For the sake of my business, I hope you can keep this a secret."

"Ahem, Mr. Zhou, you know me very well."

"Of course, this is why I found you for this mission. 10% of the profit of a trade route between Qingpu and Liuding, the type of trade is food."

Chapter 197: Gathering a force

Zhou Guoping brought a good news from the Sixth Street.

Black Blood Mercenaries accepted the mission and mobilized to Taifu river the next day. In addition to the new recruits, a mercenary group of 85 people on the wasteland could be considered a sizable force.

When Zhou Guoping threw a bait of 10% food trade profit, Luo Yang agreed without the slightest hesitation.

The popularity of the food industry in Sixth Street was proven to be a lucrative business. And because of this, Zhao Corporation controlling the entire market had crystals flooding in, and everyone in Sixth Street was well aware of this.

Hearing Zhou Guoping's words and considering the relationship between the Fishbone Base and Zhao Corporation, it finally dawned on Luo Yang. The food in the Sixth Street actually came from the Fishbone Base! Presumably, Zhao Chenwu, that old fox, was controlling the underground sewerage entrance which must be leading to the Fishbone Base.

But Luo Yang didn't spread the shocking piece of news out since the less the number of people knew, the more advantageous it would be for him. If he could manage to get a slice of the pie of the trade route to Liuding, he would accept the mission at whatever cost! With Black Blood Mercenaries' reputation, there wouldn't be a problem in transporting the goods from Qingpu to Liuding

situated at the exit of the Yangtze River.

With a stable source of income, Black Blood Mercenaries' equipment and size would expand and improve, and his prestige would consequently heighten. If he could manage to become a council member, he would be able to join the ranks of the inner circle of the powerful!

Despite having accepted the mission, there was one point he was confused about.

Since Fishbone Base had a special relationship with Zhao Corporation, why didn't they request help from them? To protect his own interest, Zhao Chenwu would do anything to help, wouldn't he?

Jiang Chen had obviously considered this problem.

It's just that...

"How did you get in trouble again?" Sitting in the virtual boardroom, Zhao Chenwu smiled wryly.

"Trouble finds me," Jiang Chen shrugged.

"Sixth Street is not too peaceful these days. I really can't send out some forces to face the mutated humans from the Seventh area. Maybe you should consider relocating?" Zhao Chenwu pondered for a moment before proposing.

"Relocate? That means all my efforts would have gone to waste. I have spent almost 400 thousands crystals for the construction of the base. At any rate, I won't give up on the base especially since my odds of winning are not low."

"Then I'll pray for your victory. The batch of sentinel machine guns, I'm finally able to fulfill the contract under the pressure of the council, and I can deliver it to you tomorrow."

"Pressure from the higher-ups? When did the council start encouraging a breach of contract?" Jiang Chen jested.

"It is a critical time."

"What kind of trouble did you guys encounter?" Seeing the graveness on Zhao Chenwu's face, Jiang Chen also became serious.

"Although it is considered a secret, if it was like anytime before, the news would spread out regardless. The military government controlling Northern Alliance District has declared war on us, and they are currently on their way."

"It's them?"

"Have you heard already?" Seeing the shock on Jiang Chen's face, Zhao Chenwu shrugged, 'In order to obtain the space-based weapon wreckage landed somewhere in the metropolis, they came from thousands of miles away to incite trouble."

Zhao Chenwu obviously misinterpreted something. The reason why Jiang Chen got shocked was that the organization that partnered up with the mutated humans was also from the Northern Alliance District. Except it was not the military government but a rather strange organization with an even peculiar name—the Dusk Church.

"The God's Cane?' Jiang Chen asked solemnly.

"That's right. To defend against Northern Alliance's invasion, the Council of Ten passed a proposal. To create a defense line at the rural area to defend against the invasion. But if it was just this, it wouldn't be so problematic."

Zhao Chenwu's face was cast in gloom, he paused before continuing, "Although we agreed to fight off the enemy before hunting for the treasure, almost everyone has already been secretly sending in exploration teams into the metropolis. Especially when the news of 1 million crystals mission has spread out, everyone has gone insane. Those fools, who were previously reserved and heading out secretly, are now blatantly sending out their forces and rushing downtown. Just like those gamblers who had completely lost their mind on a gambling table."

"No one has realized that doing this at this time is foolish?" Jiang Chen had no other emotion except for derision.

"Not everyone is foolish and that includes me," Zhao Chenwu bleak expression stared at the table, "If anyone obtains that thing,

it would be a nightmare for everyone else. If could dominate all life and death, just like a scepter from God."

Saying this, the ruthless businessman had a hint of insanity between his brows.

"Just imagine this: if there is a sword hanging over everyone's head, who else can resist your reign? It only takes one shot from that tungsten rod that can't be intercepted to silent all voice of resistance. And that sword is now somewhere in the city center, behind all of us. Now...everyone wants to become a person wielding the sword."

"This damned democracy."

Everyone wanted to become the dictator.

If there was only a single voice from the beginning, it wouldn't be this chaotic.

...

Asking help from Zhao Chenwu was not possible anymore, but that was to be expected.

He already had enough chips in his hands, without one or two guests, it wouldn't interfere with the fireworks.

Counting in the Black Blood Mercenaries, the total number of soldiers that could fight on the frontline had already reached 200 people. Although there was still a huge discrepancy, he still had his last resort.

That was none other than the survivors from Qingpu!

After the last expedition, they had been unified under the Fishbone banner. After a month of doing business, the relationship between the two parties was further strengthened.

Since the beginning, Jiang Chen had always include them in the plan, and he was just waiting for an opportunity.

The opportunity to unite everyone, the opportunity to display the might of Fishbone.

And now, the opportunity had presented itself.

Outside of the Fishbone Base, in front of the concrete building used for trading goods, a long lineup could be seen.

"Long time no see, Zhao Gang." Ma Zhongchen hugged his old friend whom he hadn't seen for a while as he regarded the winter garment on Zhao Gang enviously. The whole set would probably cost 30-40 crystals which would be equivalent to the price of a Reaper rifle.

Despite Zhao Gang's usual taciturn behavior, when he saw his old

friend, a smile emerged on his face.

Jiang Chen called Chen Weiguo back yesterday and was once again sent to the frontline.

Zhao Gang pulled Ma Zhongchen to the side. He passed him a cigarette while he also put one in his own mouth and then lit it up.

"How are you doing these days?"

"Same old. Nice smell, what brand is this?"

"The base's own produce." The boss brought it back as part of the benefits for employees. As for its exact origin, Zhao Gang couldn't be bothered about it.

"The winter is so cold and you guys are quite well off," Ma Zhongchen remarked as he enviously eyed the large-caliber machine gun on the wall.

"It should be us, shouldn't it?"

The two stared at each other and started laughing.

The line in front of the concrete building moved up slowly. People coming out of the room had switched into the winter gear as they entered the base under the supervision of the soldiers.

According to the agreement, all the survivors joining the Fishbone army would receive housing and upper-class citizen treatment, and their family would receive lower-citizen treatment. After contributing in war and being promoted to knight, their family would also enjoy upper-class citizen treatment.

As of today, more than 20 community-sized survivors have joined Fishbone Base. All the people were incorporated into a newly created foreign army with Zhao Gang as the commander. Currently, there were only 81 people in the force, but everyone was a sharpshooter.

With a bit of training, they could become a force to be reckoned with.

So far, the Fishbone's soldiers had exceeded the 300 mark.

The day of the decisive battle was gradually approaching.

Chapter 198: The Sword Wielder

The God's Cane was formerly known as God's Cane Space-based Kinetic Energy Weapon System. NATO completed the deployment of the weapon system in 2030, but now its combat ability was no longer limited to kinetic energy attack.

Over the past hundred years, NATO had continuously perfected this weapon system. Although its core attack was still a vertical strike by tungsten rod bombs, in addition to that, NATO had also added high power microwave weapon (HPM), wide-area electromagnetic pulse (EMP), as well as particle shields aboard the weapon system. NATO completely transformed it into a hedgehog-like existence—a near-Earth orbit weapon platform.

Though Jiang Chen had already experienced the power of this weapon, after listening to Lin Lin's explanation, he still got astonished.

Seeing the shock on Jiang Chen's face, Lin Lin haughtily raised her head and paused before continuing, "That is a really powerful weapon. It is believed that to destroy it, PAC launched 27 nuclear missiles to the low Earth orbit, but they were all unfortunately intercepted. Finally, while the God's Cane's HMP was on cooldown after it had just attacked the Holy Shield system, relying on the aerospace special force's attack at ten crystals cost near-Earth orbit landers, they finally managed to capture it."

However, before they even had the opportunity to hold the "cane", NATO had initiated the "God's Cane's" self-destruction program in the hope of destroying it and preventing it from falling

into the enemy's hands. So the superweapon that was in the service for over 150 years had turned into a space junk.

No one knew this weapon better than Lin Lin. After all, she was a former PAC researcher, so she more or less understood the specifics of the weapon.

"Wait, space debris?"

"Yeah, is there any problem?" Lin Lin asked, tilting her head.

"Didn't God's Cane fall onto the Earth's surface?" Jiang Chen asked with a frown.

"Of course not, I can attest to that. The post-war World Alliance Organization had considered recovering the remains at the near-Earth orbit, but the proposal was not implemented because shortly after, the implementation of space colonization plan was passed with a landslide victory. You know what happened next—six colony ships were sent to the deep space."

"Is that so?" Jiang Chen said thoughtfully.

"Why the sudden interest?" Lin Lin was puzzled.

"What if someone used a supercomputer to determine that the remains of God's Cane fell into the downtown of Wanchai City?"

"That's impossible. You've been duped," Lin Lin unceremoniously denied.

[Did I get fooled?]

Jiang Chen fell into deep thought.

Or did everyone get fooled?

This was troublesome.

...

Inside an ancient room, a tripod incense burner stood on top of a table, smoke floated on top of it. A man with grey sideburns leaned against a recliner, his eyes were closed, and he appeared to be taking a nap. Next to him was a woman dressed in cheongsam, and though her face could not be considered gorgeous, she certainly looked graceful.

The old-fashioned visage obviously didn't match the high-rise buildings outside the window.

To be able to build such a large manor in such a ritzy area of Sixth Street, this person must possess an immense amount of power.

Indeed, the man on the chair was Cao Jinsong, the owner of

Crimson Chamber of Commerce and the head of the Council of Ten.

There was a knock at the door, and the man slightly opened his eyes.

"Come in." His voice was slow and gentle but without a trace of his old age.

The door slowly opened, and a woman walked in.

The face was identical to the cheongsam beauty standing beside him.

Almost as if they were cut out from the exact same mold.

Other than being twins, there was only one explanation to this: they were clones.

"Nine members of the council have sent large-scale forces to the metropolis. Among them, the Double-headed Bull Chamber of Commerce was the largest with a total of 207 people, two spider tanks, and five armored vehicles..."

Hearing his secretary's report, Cao Jinsong's eyes narrowed while nodding.

When she finished, he briefly pondered for a moment before

asking, "What about that Zhao Chenwu? Did he do anything?"

That person was slightly shrewder compared to the other council members, and his sight was not blinded by the dazzling brilliance of the crystals.

"He deployed scouts to Luzhou, and also sent a team to the city center, but their teams did not advance and just lagged behind our team," the secretary reported as she pushed her eyeglasses up.

Cao Jinsong suddenly laughed. The wrinkles that had been etched on his face through the passage of time blossomed and transformed him into a kind, old man.

The laughter, however, carried a few strands of menace.

"Although everyone wants to be the person wielding that sword, it would be interesting if that sword didn't exist in the first place."

Conclusive evidence and foreign spying. Just these two points alone seemed to be enough evidence to prove the existence of God's Cane.

"Is it that time already?" Cao Jinsong looked at the smoke above the incense burner and smiled.

The expressionless secretary just quietly looked at him, without saying a word.

"Bring that thing over."

"It has already been prepared." A trace of a smile appeared on the female secretary's face. She took out the holographic computer pen from her pocket and handed it to him.

He took the holographic computer pen, but his forefinger stopped at the start button.

On the metal surface, two faces were reflected: one old and the other young.

The young face belonged to his wife. She was so frail that she couldn't get through the first year. Before she passed away, he promised her that he would bring order to this chaotic wasteland.

Afterwards, he would join her down there.

After the collapse of all civilizations, a new civilization would be reborn from the ashes. The new civilization would be powerful as ever and rise from the Phoenix fire. It would learn from the past mistakes of the ruined civilization and abandon any weaknesses from the past civilization.

In this radiation-filled wasteland, not only the mutant's claws and human's marksmanship evolved, but also things of a higher level had also evolved.

Thirteen years ago, the walls of Sixth Street were built. The gathering place built by the survivors of the settlement gave birth to the seed of civilization.

However, this seed had been dormant for far too long.

Even though the expedition brought prosperity to it, it was only a basic level of prosperity.

When it came to one's own interest, the council would engage into endless squabbles.

Without a unified voice, nothing would come out of it.

He had enough of these endless disputes.

The people from Northern Alliance would perhaps come but definitely not at this time. What they wanted was definitely not the God's Cane but something entirely different.

Ten years ago, the unification of the Northern Alliance was completed.

If this continued, Sixth Street would no longer be its match. It would become a mere speck in the history. But everything here was the fruit of his hard labor, and he couldn't bear to end like this.

This piece of land needs a dictatorship!

"Hero or criminal, only history will tell," muttering to himself, Cao Jinsong closed his eyes.

Suddenly, he opened his eyes and looked at the Secretary in front of him.

"Qin Lian, could you lend me some courage?"

The woman didn't say anything and merely put her hand on his. The woman in cheongsam standing beside him also came over and held out her hand.

Taking a deep breath, a crazed expression returned to his face.

"Then let's begin."

He pressed the button.

A fire started burning and the manor of the Crimson Chamber of Commerce in the Sixth Street was completely incinerated.

Rumor had it that it was the conspiracy of Zhao Corporation plotting for "the treasure".

At the same time, another fire broke out in the center of the city

dozens of kilometers away.

It was the fire of civil war.

Chapter 199: Civil War

"What do you think is the boss planning?" A soldier wielding a rifle and clad in carbon nanotube armor walked at the forefront of the troops.

"I don't know." The commander next to him was silent. The tactical helmet hid the expression on his face, but the way he was looking around betrayed the anxiousness in his heart.

They were Zhao Corporations's private soldiers.

Two Spider tanks, five armored vehicles, four modified trucks, 20 power armors and 120 soldiers.

80% of their fighting force had been placed on the gambling table.

There were only five kilometers left before they reached the metropolis. The area was filled with nuclear craters, a place not even the Death Claws would dare to enter.

The order that Zhao Chenwu had issued was very vague—follow the troops of Crimson Chamber of Commerce wait for further orders.

Just simply follow?

The two sentries in the front row weren't the only ones who were anxious, but also the squad leader, Chen Wei, sitting in the armored vehicle looked grave.

Staring at the screen of the Wanderer tanks, Chen Wei swallowed.

10-meter long, 3.8-meter wide, and 2.6-meter tall, weighed 112 tons, and could accommodate 3-4 passengers. Its main weapon was the 52-type particle cannon and a 2kg-class electromagnetic pulse cannon as coaxial guns. Its whole body was covered with 140mm thick A-grade steel armor with a built-in high-density supramolecular compartment that could withstand high-energy neutron radiation caused by a neutron bomb explosion, while the particle shield could effectively resist energy weapons attacks.

It was practically a moving fortress.

A wave of zombies advanced, but under the giant's oppression, the only thing the zombies could do was to provide lubrication for its track with its flesh and fat.

The thick primary cannon was covered in snow and had never fired a single shot the moment it left the base. The 2kg-class electromagnetic pulse cannon also appeared very dormant and would only occasionally fire whenever it encountered a Roshan.

Under the power and influence of this metallic monster, even in the danger-filled metropolis, these two forces couldn't provide much resistance.

"They stopped," the sentry from the front row casually said.

"It's probably their time to rest."

Because the zombies in the forefront had already been cleared out by the Crimson Chamber of Commerce, they didn't even need to fire, so they could casually chat among themselves.

The expression under the sentry's tactical helmet gradually turned to that of horror.

"No, this is odd—there's something wrong with their cannon."

VROOM!

The sound of a cannon firing drowned his astonished voice.

The 2kg bomb easily separated his flesh and ripped through the roof of the armored vehicle.

"We're under attack by our allied force! Dammit, what do they think they're doing!"

"Take cover! Go take cover in the bunker, quick!"

"Attention everyone! That is not a friendly force, I repeat, that is

not a friendly force," Chen Wei's voice began to echo in everyone's communication channel. The forces in the forefront, who were taking cover, immediately began to fire back.

The aerodynamic Spider tank slid around on the main road. Six sets of weight-bearing wheels were separated in the middle to form into four square-shaped mechanical legs as they quickly began to climb on top of the half-destroyed buildings. The remaining four armored vehicles along with modified trucks also promptly turned around the corner, using the terrain to avoid the barrel of the Wanderer's tank. Whereas the infantries in the area searched for shelter while taking out their rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers and begun firing back.

Because Chen Wei sensed something was amiss from the start, he ordered the team to form a long formation. Although it was much easier to defend against zombies in a square formation, if an enemy attack at the front, the long formation would allow the force in the back to quickly disperse and minimize the loss.

"Have they found the remains of the satellite yet?" Chen Wei struck at the armor shell as he stared at the image transmitted from the solider's tactical helmet.

The reckless movement of the tank completely ignored the rocket launchers flying towards it.

Even if he had two Spider tanks as backups, he still didn't have the confidence to win.

<Permission to fire back.>

Four big yellow characters appeared in the center of the screen and a rueful smile appeared on Chen Wu's face.

They already started to retaliate.

Although he was counting on the boss to stop the war through diplomacy, it now seemed like they have to fight through it.

BOOM!

Two rounds of shell were fired at a 50 degrees angle from the roof of a half-destroyed building, with an orange flame trail, it smashed onto the Wanderer tank's turret before it got deflected into the window of an abandoned shop.

"The shell was deflected!"

The eerie blue electric arc had enveloped the shell of the tank but didn't even leave a dent.

"Dammit! That's an electromagnetic reactive armor!"

Specially designed against piercing shells, through a unique interaction field, the metal shell could reach superconducting state after breaking through a certain speed threshold. Under the powerful magnetic field outside the armor, according to the

Meissner effect, shells that had become superconductors would produce an enormous magnetic field in the opposite direction, thereby attenuating its kinetic energy and shifting the projectile angle.

This armor had a miraculous use against the conductive material of the electromagnetic cannon shells. It also had certain effects on the artillery steel core armor-piercing shells.

"Change into insulation shells."

"Roger."

The Wanderer tank quickly retreated, and because of the angle limitation of the cannon, it could only aim at the Spider tank on the roof with an increasing distance.

However, the Spider tanks occupying a favorable terrain wouldn't allow its plan to succeed. So while on the move, they fired at the metal monster on the road.

Zombies, Crimson Chamber of Commerce, and Zhao Corporation.

These three giants engaged with each other.

With the heavy armors leaving the battle, the zombies that weren't blocked lunged at the two parties exchanging fire while howling and screaming.

If they were just fighting with the zombies alone, these well-trained soldiers would definitely not let these dumb things get closer. Today, however, everyone was not just facing the threat of zombies, but the enemy's bullets as well.

Everything devolved into an utter chaos.

"Dammit, their firepower is too suppressive! We need backup!" Leaning against the side of the bunker, while shooting at the incoming zombies, the soldiers in carbon nanotube combat suits roared at the communication device they're clutching.

"Someone's down, medics!"

"Dammit, it's the Death Claw! Ahhh—"

"Zombies had broken through the line of defense! Requesting armored vehicle support!"

"Negative. The enemies' anti-armor units have yet to be cleared. Unable to enter the battle—"

Turning off the noisy communication channel, Chen Wei rubbed his forehead. A ferocious glint appeared on his face and his eyes were locked on the several big characters on the screen.

<Available support: Disaster-32 Cruise Missile>

Just now, he finally understood the meaning of the phrase: "caution" that Zhao Chenwu left before leaving.

From the start, the boss had already suspected that Crimson Chamber of Commerce had gone rogue.

This type of limited superweapons was definitely not used in dealing with the zombies.

If Crimson Chamber of Commerce's trump card was the Wanderer tank, then the trump card of Zhao Corporation was this. The bombs sold to Fishbone Base were only old technology, while the more powerful weapons have always been kept under Zhao Chenwu's control.

Without any hesitation, Chen Wei pressed the <launch> button.

Without a warning.

On a barren field 100 kilometers away, the flat ground was suddenly split open. After the item used to camouflage was removed, the metal plate hidden under the layer of the soil was gradually separated.

This was the missile well left by PAC. To escape air raids, this improvised one-time use missile silo was common on this piece of land.

The light blue signal light extended from the top to the bottom of the silo.

"Missile silo 72 is about to fire. Workers, please take shelter immediately."

The electronic voice announcing its launch had scared the mutant mice that were biting the roots of plants away.

In a flash, the smoke burst and instantly covered the whole area.

The 10-meter long missile pierced through the sky filled with radiation dust.

"Ten seconds before arriving at the target location. Commander, please set the target."

Taking a deep breath, Chen Wei's eyes tightly locked on the rampaging Wanderer tanks. Using his finger, he dragged the crosshair onto the red box.

<Target lock successful.>

"Attention! Attack A, Attack B, immediately move away from the target area."

"Roger."

After receiving the command, the Spider tanks quickly jumped off the building, the six pairs of weight-bearing wheels formed together reverting back to driving mode.

Seeing that the enemy units suddenly retreated, the Wanderer tank realizing that it might have been targeted by long-range weapons immediately fired heat-induced bait bombs and electromagnetic decoy targets. It then shifted into overdrive and crashed into the side of the building.

The solid concrete wall disintegrated like a piece of paper under the impact, as it attempted to use the 10-meter tall building as cover.

But it was too late.

A trail of grey smoke instantly fell from the sky.

Suddenly, everything dimmed down.

The arc-shaped flames instantly ignited. The shockwave didn't just blow away the concrete blocks and scattered the particles shield away, but also the armor shell as well.

The buildings that survived the aftershock of the nuclear blast had collapsed due to the direct impact of the cruise missile. The Disaster-32 cruise missile was designed based on a fictitious aircraft carrier, so taking care a tank was definitely no big deal.

Even those from thousands of meters away felt the tremor of the ground.

The flames on the horizon made the thick snow lose its color and deafened the continuous gun firing shots.

The tide of war was instantly reversed.

The Crimson Chamber of Commerce that just lost its strongest armored unit was immediately under heavy fire suppression by the two Spider tanks. Aside from the Wanderer tanks, they didn't bring more armored units, only thirty infantries and dozens of powered armors.

Seeing that his own soldiers had the upper hand, Chen Wei slowly let out a sigh of relief.

Zhao Corporation had already won the battle.

Although the price was expensive.

The Sixth Street Council was probably making a ruckus at this moment, but it was something not for him to worry about.

Gunshots were getting sparse, the soldiers of the Crimson Chamber of Commerce fought valiantly, preparing to fight to the bitter end.

But this still could not change the outcome of their defeat.

"Enemy units have been cleared." Hearing the communication by his ear, Chen Wei was relieved.

"Regroup. Set up a blockade to block the zombies, recuperate, and prepare to head back."

"What is that!"

"God!"

Two soldiers opened the trunk of the captured armored vehicle.

Staring at the screen, Chen Wei's pupil contracted.

Nuclear bomb!

Staring at the distant mushroom cloud, Cao Jinsong's face flashed a touch of mockery.

At the moment, he was standing on a barren land a few kilometers away from the wilderness, and there was a pickup truck parked next to him.

"Sheesh, you've finally used Disaster-32?"

He shoved the binoculars in his pocket, shook his head, and returned to the truck.

Whether or not the sword of Damocles exists, the sword hanging above his head had disappeared.

The price of a Wanderer tank in exchange for the trump card that scared the living daylight out of him. A nuclear missile and 72 lives in exchange for 80% of Zhao Chenwu's force.

And Wanderer tanks, he still had four of these left.

If it had been a poker game, then the outcome of the battle had already been decided?

Chapter 200: At the same time

"Did you hear the noise?" Sun Jiao raised her eyebrows as she asked Jiang Chen.

The snow was thick, as the two were standing on the bank of Taifu river.

"I think so, did something explode?" Jiang Chen stared towards the east, but the flurry blocked his vision.

There were two explosions; it was hard to tell which one was louder. It seemed to be from somewhere in the far distance.

"Let's not be distracted anymore." Sun Jiao sighed, her eyes narrowing while starrng across the river. "The party is about to start."

"You are right." Jiang Chen smiled.

All combat units have been sent to the front line.

271 soldiers, 8 Tigers, as well as 15 modified pickup trucks.

The Black Blood Mercenaries have already sneaked past the river as they had taken cover on a snow hill a few kilometers away.

Everything was prepared.

He dragged the scarf away from his neck as white mist emerged from Jiang Chen's mouth.

"Let's start."

"Understood! My commander." Sun Jiao naughtily blinked her eyes before she turned around to step into the T-3 power armor.

The night began to fall as the snowfall slowed.

The searchlight in the center of the camp, as well as the four corners, shook rhythmically and lit up the snow hills around them.

Rows of mutated humans carried rifles as they patrolled their camp. Their steel armor, lined with fur, prevented their skin from being in direct contact with the steel.

There were around fifty trucks parked on the empty lot in front of the camp. The daunting gun and cannon barrels create a metal forest. White sheets covered them as they blended into the snow.

They didn't even consider the enemy across the river an opponent.

In their eyes, only a round of attack would allow them to drag those cowards out of the trenches and shred them into pieces.

Shooting was not their strong suit.

Because of their fat finger, to make it easy to shoot, they had to saw off the trigger ring. This was also why they preferred machine guns as most machine guns were not as small as rifles.

Due to their build, they didn't need to consider the large, heavy firepower and weight of the guns.

The last group of soldiers had arrived at the base. Once the ice is strong enough to withstand the weight of their armor, they would sound the horn to charge.

But that day will never happen.

"Did you hear something?" The mutated human at the gate of the base tilted his head and looked at his comrade.

The mutated human raised his eyebrows but didn't seem to find the source of the noise.

"Look! What is that!"

There were screams, and a mutated human pointed at the dark sky.

Something had fallen from the radiation dust, it carried a visible trail of flame and began to accelerate.

But they didn't have more time to think about it.

Boom!

The searchlight in the center of the base and the four corners shattered with the noise. The light that shined on the four sides instantly faded.

At that moment, a few trails of orange flame rose in the sky and exploded. The blinding white light turned the base into day light.

It was a lighting shell!

"Dammit, it's an enemy strike!" The mutated human standing at the gate roared out before he took out the light machine gun behind his back and began to fire at the snow hill.

The mutated humans didn't expect that the human taking cover behind barriers would attack them during the night.

The mutated humans were not worried by the human's night strike, rather, they felt a sense of excitement.

They are asking for their own death!

But that kind of confidence didn't last long.

Under the cover of the lighting shell, a missile with a trail of red flame had fallen from the sky.

In the terrified vision of all mutated humans, it landed in the middle of the base.

Boom!

Flames instantly erupted.

It engulfed the vehicles covered by white, the mutated humans preparing to enter the vehicle, as well as the supplies hidden under the snow.

The merciless chain explosion started. It played a symphony inside the mutated human's base.

Running, screaming, desperately trying to remove the scorching steel armor, and falling when out of energy as they waited for the flame grim reaper's cultivation.

The steel debris and snow were blown into the air as they melted into liquid in the heat wave as if it was a firework celebration.

It was living hell.

No one suspected the "rats" across the river possessed a cruise

missile.

Of course, it was obviously not a cruise missile. It was only a rocket equipped with 1000 kilograms of concentrated explosives. One kilogram was 20 crystals, and along with the cost of the missile, the mega firework cost Jiang Chen thirty thousand crystals.

But so what, compared to the effect it caused, the thirty thousand crystals were well spent.

Gazing at the fire across the river, Jiang Chen pulled out the flare gun, and he shouted at the top of his lungs.

"Attack!"

"Roger!"

The red flare broke through the night sky.

Eight homing voices rose as the 5 kg bombs smashed into the base across the river.

The shock of the missile explosion had blown away the snow piles. There was no cover between the two forces. With the range advantage, the electric pulse canon unloaded its firepower.

The infantry with their rifles stepped out of the trenches, under

the leadership of six power armors, they all charged at the opposing river bank.

The Black Blood Mercenaries, who've crossed the river, engaged in crossfire with the mutated humans already. The rain drop like lighting shells lit up the night sky.

Because the explosive was made of Magnesium powder and other oxidants, the flames didn't fade away for a long time.

Under the intense light, the position of the mutated humans was fully exposed. But it was a problem even for the mutated humans with rifles to aim at the target in the dark. They could only respond by firing randomly into darkness.

Seeing the battle visual on his tablet, a smile emerged on Jiang Chen's face.

The anti-air power had been completely dissolved. The unexpected missile had not only wiped out half of their force, it completely disrupted their command structure which forced them to fight on their own.

The mutated humans wielding armors were strong, but only in the front. On an open field, if they were surrounded with bullets flying in all direction, mutated humans without formation would only be slaughtered.

The infantries fired with pace as they pushed forward under the

cover of cannons. Within the virtual reality training system, they have practiced this countless amount of times.

Sun Jiao led the six power armors with their high mobility as they roamed among the mutated humans to prevent them from gathering information.

Seeing the swiftness of this girl's action, even if she was in a metal box, recalling her shyness under himself, the feeling was indescribable.

With a face slightly red, Jiang Chen coughed as he got rid of all the unhealthy idea in his mind.

The battle was approaching its end.

The soldiers used their gun barrels to smash the half-dead mutated humans as they finished the kill off with a dagger.

There was no need for hostage. Death was the best fate for these monsters.

He retracted the tablet as he got in the armored vehicle.

"Cross the river."

"Yes, commander."

As the leader of the base, Jiang Chen began to realize he could no longer fight like a soldier on the front line. Since Fishbone base had already passed the initial growth phase where they lacked people, he gladly accepted the perspective Sun Jiao insisted, which was to stay in the back and wait for the battle to end.

The gunshots in the distance began to die down. The armored vehicle drove over the bridge.

The northern wind carried a hint of warmth. Jiang Chen who sat on top of the car looked at the remains of the mutated human's base after the explosion, but his mind had already drifted elsewhere.

This was where the mutated humans stored most of their supplies. Even if there were still two thousand something mutated humans there, this major loss would render them unable to fight another battle.

These supplies were transported from the Northern Alliance Area fifteen hundred kilometers away; it must not have been easy. Now that these supplies are destroyed, and the spy Sun Xiaorou was captured by Jiang Chen.

What would the Dusk that suffered defeat do?

Speaking of this, the Defiancer had no action at all, as even Jiang Chen almost forgot that he had an alliance.

What are they planning?

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